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Efficient solar panels choices determine future of truly green fuels

Source: The post Efficient solar panels choices determine future of truly green fuels has been created, based on the article “Why the world needs better green technologies” published in “The Hindu” on 1st August 2025

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

Context: As the world accelerates its shift to sustainable energy and aims for net-zero goals, silicon photovoltaics dominate current solar solutions. However, concerns about their efficiency, land use, and indirect effects on green hydrogen and other clean fuels are prompting discussions on the need for more advanced and diverse energy technologies.

For detailed information on **Fuelling a truly green transition** [read this article here](#)

Limitations of Silicon Photovoltaics

1. Origins and Present Dominance: Silicon solar panels, first developed in 1954 by Bell Labs and later adopted for terrestrial use, now dominate global solar installations. Around 80% of these panels are produced in China, with India having a growing domestic capacity of 6 GW.

2. Efficiency Constraints: Current panels show 18–21% laboratory efficiency and 15–18% in-field performance. This lower efficiency means larger land areas are required to meet energy demands, making silicon photovoltaics less ideal in space-constrained or environmentally sensitive regions.

3. Rising Energy Demand vs Solar Capacity: Despite widespread installation—4.45 TWh by end-2024—atmospheric CO₂ levels have continued rising (from 350 ppm in 1990 to 425 ppm in 2025). This indicates that the current renewable expansion is lagging behind growing energy needs.

Impact on Green Hydrogen and Derivatives

1. Basics of Green Hydrogen: Green hydrogen is produced by electrolyzing water using renewable electricity. It emits no greenhouse gases when used. However, producing it consumes more energy than it yields, raising efficiency concerns.

2. Storage and Transport Challenges: Hydrogen's low density makes storage and transport difficult, with high risks of leakage. To overcome this, it is often converted into green ammonia or methanol, which are easier to transport.

3. Energy Penalty Across the Chain: Each step—electrolysis, conversion, transport, reconversion—adds energy cost. Since silicon photovoltaics start the chain with low efficiency, the net greenness of green hydrogen is reduced. Thus, the foundational inefficiency compromises the overall sustainability.

Exploring Next-Generation Alternatives

1. Advanced Photovoltaics and Efficiency Gains: Other technologies, such as thin-film gallium arsenide cells, have achieved up to 47% efficiency and are nearing commercialization. Higher efficiency cells reduce land requirements and offer more energy output per unit area.

2. Artificial Photosynthesis and Direct Fuel Creation: Scientists are developing artificial photosynthesis (APS) methods that mimic plants to create fuels directly from water, sunlight, and CO₂ or nitrogen. Though still in labs, APS holds promise for direct, low-impact fuel generation.

3. RNBO and Global Innovation Trends: Europe is advancing ‘Renewable Fuels of Non-Biological Origin’ (RNBO), which exclude biomass in favor of renewable energy and feedstocks. India, still dependent on imports for 85% of its energy needs, must explore similar innovation paths.

Strategic Pathways for India

- 1. Energy Independence as a National Priority:** Geopolitical conflicts and disrupted global supply chains make energy self-sufficiency crucial. Investing in diversified and efficient energy technologies is essential to secure India's future.
- 2. Public-Private R&D Push:** India should enhance R&D spending in clean energy technologies through government and private partnerships. This includes support for high-efficiency solar cells, APS, and RNBO.
- 3. Cost-Benefit of Prevention:** Investing ₹1 crore in pollution prevention today could avert significantly higher future damage costs. Proactive innovation in energy is not only an environmental necessity but also an economic strategy.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the limitations of silicon photovoltaics affect the overall sustainability of green hydrogen and other clean fuels.

India balances Russia ties and US pressure with caution

Source: The post India balances Russia ties and US pressure with caution has been created, based on the article "How to duck the US-Russia crossfire" published in "Businessline" on 1st August 2025

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

Context: The U.S. has imposed a 25% base tariff on Indian goods, with threats of higher penalties over India's ties with Russia and BRICS. With bipartisan support for a tough Russia Sanctions Bill, pressure is building on countries like India to rethink their strategic and energy ties with Moscow.

Rising U.S. Pressure and Legislative Tools

- 1. Tariff Threats and Sanctions Bill:** President Trump has imposed a 25% base tariff on Indian goods. He also warned of additional tariffs due to India's energy deals with Russia and involvement in BRICS. The proposed Russia Sanctions Bill plans to penalise countries with strong ties to Moscow through 100–500% tariffs and specific restrictions.
- 2. Use of U.S. Sanctions Laws:** The U.S. uses several laws to implement economic pressure globally. These include CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act), IEEPA, the Global Magnitsky Act, the Iran Sanctions Act, and others. These laws are enforced by government departments like the Treasury (OFAC), Commerce (BIS), State, FinCEN, and Justice.
- 3. Indian Energy Trade Under Scrutiny:** India's imports of Russian oil rose from 2% to over 40% between FY22 and FY24, saving ₹35,000 crore. India settled many payments in rupees and dirhams, avoiding the U.S. dollar and SWIFT system. This move, while economically beneficial, has made Washington uncomfortable.
- 4. Quiet Financial Alternatives:** India is exploring alternatives to the dollar such as rupee-ruble trade, BRICS Pay, and the RuPay-MIR card interface. These aim to bypass the dominance of the U.S. financial system and allow smoother transactions with Russia and BRICS partners.

India's Strategic Autonomy and Balanced Diplomacy

- 1. Pragmatic Foreign Policy Approach:** India avoids binary choices. While deepening ties with the U.S. through QUAD and I2U2, it retains strong engagements with Russia in energy, defence, and space. Simultaneously, it builds relations with Europe, East Asia, ASEAN, and the Global South.

2. Navigating U.S.-Russia Rivalry: India emphasizes development-linked exemptions, energy security, and global governance participation. It neither capitulates to Western pressure nor displays open defiance.

3. Multi-Aligned Engagements: India balances diverse partnerships—signing tech and defence pacts with the U.S. while maintaining legacy defence deals with Russia. This strategy upholds autonomy and avoids bloc-driven politics.

4. Resilience Through Industrial Diplomacy: Efforts like Make in India, PLI schemes, and indigenisation in defence highlight India's goal to strengthen industrial and economic sovereignty amid global shifts.

Policy Responses to U.S. Sanctions Threat

1. Strengthening Financial Independence: India must accelerate rupee-based international trade with Russia, UAE, and Sri Lanka. Fast-tracking a dollar-neutral reference rate mechanism will enhance trade resilience.

2. Diversifying Energy and Trade Partners: To limit over dependence, India should build strategic ties with West Asia, Africa, Latin America, and BRICS nations, securing and diversifying its supply chains.

3. Defending Sovereign Economic Rights: India must challenge unilateral sanctions using international legal platforms, stressing the illegality of extraterritorial penalties not backed by global consensus.

4. Building Mutual Economic Stakes: Joint ventures in defence manufacturing and semiconductor partnerships with countries like the U.S., Japan, and Taiwan can serve as deterrents against coercive policies.

5. Maintaining Narrative Neutrality: India should continue interest-based, issue-specific diplomacy while remaining neutral in polarised geopolitical narratives.

Upholding India's Global Role and Norms

1. Realism Anchored in International Law: India's foreign policy should blend realist strategy with commitment to international rules. This approach legitimises its multi-alignment while resisting unilateral dictates.

2. Projecting Developmental Sovereignty: India must continue positioning itself as a sovereign actor with a responsible voice, pursuing balanced ties to protect its strategic and developmental interests.

Question for practice:

Examine how India is balancing its strategic autonomy amidst rising U.S. sanctions pressure over its ties with Russia.

NEP 2020 transforms early education in government schools

Source: The post NEP 2020 transforms early education in government schools has been created, based on the article “Transforming early childhood care and education” published in “The Hindu ” on 1st August 2025

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

Context: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has initiated a major transformation in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in India. Historically limited to Anganwadis in the public sector, ECCE is now expanding into government schools, aiming to address inequity and enhance the quality of preschool education nationwide.

For detailed information on **National Education Policy 2020 – Significance & Challenges** [read this article here](#)

Structural Expansion of ECCE

1. Inclusion of Preschool in Government Schools: NEP 2020 introduces preschool classes (Balvatika 1–3) in government schools for children aged 3–6. This expansion breaks the earlier norm where public education began at Class 1, thereby promoting educational equity.

2. Anticipated Growth in Infrastructure: India's ECCE infrastructure, long stagnant with about 14 lakh Anganwadis, is set to grow as government schools now begin to accommodate preschoolers. This shift will significantly increase the number of public ECCE centres.

3. Implications for Human Resources: The expansion demands increased financing, recruitment, and training of ECCE professionals. Effective personnel management will be essential for delivering quality education.

4. Budget Allocation and State Response: The Ministry of Education has begun funding ECCE through Samagra Shiksha. While some States and UTs have initiated preschool classes, others have either not started or have only partially used the funds, limiting progress.

Shift from Anganwadis to Schools

1. Educational Emphasis over Nutrition: There is a noticeable move towards prioritising education over health and nutrition in ECCE. This is evident in UTs like Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, where preschool classes have been introduced in all primary schools.

2. Parental Preference for Schools: Parents increasingly choose schools over Anganwadis for children aged 4–6, perceiving better education opportunities. This shift endangers the traditional identity of Anganwadis as early childhood hubs.

3. Need for Anganwadi Adaptation: To remain relevant, Anganwadis must integrate education as a core service. The 'Poshan bhi Padhai bhi' initiative from the Ministry of Women and Child Development aims to address this, but its success hinges on proper ground-level implementation.

4. Avoiding Over-Schooling in Preschools

Government schools must guard against excessive 'schoolification'. Play-based learning must remain central to preschool education to ensure holistic skill development beyond early literacy.

Reorienting Anganwadi Focus to 0–3 Year Olds

1. Significance of Home Visits: Global and Indian research highlights the developmental importance of home visits for children aged 0–3. The 'Perry Preschool at 50' study in the United States and a Yale University–Pratham study in Odisha demonstrate that home-based early interventions can yield long-term cognitive and behavioural benefits.

2. Policy Recommendations Supporting Shift: Policymakers such as **Dr. V.K. Paul**, Member of NITI Aayog, and **N.C. Saxena**, retired IAS officer and former Planning Commission member, have long advocated focusing on infants and toddlers within the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** framework. They stress the need to prioritise the early years due to their lasting impact on human development.

3. Operational Constraints: Despite such recommendations, overburdened Anganwadi workers often focus on the 3–6 age group physically present at centres. This leaves limited time and energy for conducting home visits for 0–3 year olds and supporting pregnant or lactating mothers.

4. A Unique Opportunity for Transformation: If government schools continue to take over the education of 3–6-year-olds, the Anganwadi system can redirect its core function to 0–3-year-olds and maternal health. This realignment, already envisioned in **NEP 2020**, can mark a transformative change in India's early childhood care model.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the National Education Policy 2020 is reshaping Early Childhood Care and Education in India through structural shifts in preschool expansion, Anganwadi roles, and emphasis on home-based interventions.

India's Digital Sovereignty Compromised in UK Trade Deal

Source: The post India's Digital Sovereignty Compromised in UK Trade Deal has been created, based on the article "What has been missed is India's digital sovereignty" published in "The Hindu" on 2nd August 2025

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

Context: The India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), praised as a 'gold standard' by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, raises serious concerns over key concessions in the digital sector. Despite its deep implications, the agreement's impact on India's digital sovereignty has gone largely unexamined.

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

Undermining India's Digital Sovereignty

1. Reversal of Key Policy Positions: India has abandoned core digital policy stances long held at global forums like the WTO. Even the U.S., once a strong advocate of such provisions, has reversed similar positions in recent years.

2. Long-Term Consequences of Digital Rules: Digital trade agreements are not like commodity deals. They involve rule-making that locks countries into long-term frameworks. Reversing such rules later is extremely difficult.

3. Absence of Political Pushback: Unlike agriculture or manufacturing, digital sovereignty lacks a vocal domestic constituency. This absence has allowed serious concessions to pass without political resistance.

Critical Concessions on Source Code Access

1. Loss of Pre-Access Rights to Source Code: India gave up the right to demand source code access before approving foreign digital products, even in sensitive sectors like AI, telecom, and health. Only post-facto access for investigations is allowed.

2. Contrast with Global Practice: Earlier U.S.-led agreements excluded software for critical infrastructure. Even mass-market software had exceptions. In contrast, the India-UK FTA bans source code access for *all* software.

3. Impact on Regulation and Safety: This limits regulators' ability to inspect embedded software for safety, security, and compliance. It also prevents timely upgrades, weakening India's control over digital systems.

Surrendering Access to National Data

1. Conceding Open Government Data: India has granted equal access to Open Government Data for UK entities. Although non-binding, this signals a shift in how India views its national data assets.

2. Risks to AI and National Security: Data is the foundation of AI. Allowing foreign access undermines India's ability to build its own AI solutions and poses risks of data misuse.

3. Disconnect with National Goals: This concession contradicts India's stated ambition to become a global AI leader. It jeopardises the digital advantage India could have developed using its own data.

Weakening India's Data Governance Stand

1. Risky Clause on Data Localisation: India agreed to consult the UK if it offers better data terms to another country. This weakens India's longstanding position on data localisation.

2. Opening Doors to Future Pressure: Such clauses create vulnerabilities in future deals. Other countries may demand similar treatment, reducing India's policy flexibility.

3. Ignoring Global Policy Shifts: Even the U.S. has stepped back from pushing free data flow. India's move seems uninformed by these recent global changes.

The Need for a Coherent Digital Strategy

1. Lack of Digital Industrialisation Plan: India appears unprepared. It lacks a defined roadmap for becoming a digital power and is reacting without strategic clarity.

2. Need for Clear Policy Framework: India must urgently create a digital sovereignty and industrialisation policy to guide trade negotiations and digital decisions.

3. Inclusion of Experts in Negotiations: Trade negotiators should work with digital experts who can represent national interests and escalate critical issues to top leadership.

Question for practice:

Discuss how India's digital trade concessions in the UK FTA affect its digital sovereignty and long-term interests.

Mangroves safeguard coasts and power sustainable growth

Source: The post Mangroves safeguard coasts and power sustainable growth has been created, based on the article "The fact is mangroves drive business" published in "The Hindu" on 2nd August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment

Context: Mangroves are crucial for coastal protection, fisheries, and climate resilience. Yet, they remain sidelined in planning and policy. Their decline threatens natural infrastructure and economic stability. In a time of increasing climate risks, mangroves must be reimagined as assets for sustainable growth and security.

Recognising Mangroves as Natural Capital

1. Undervalued Economic Role: Mangroves provide billions in ecosystem services, including buffering coastal cities and supporting marine life. Despite their value, they are rarely included in economic assessments or policy decisions.

2. Quantifying Ecosystem Services: Valuations highlight their worth. Mangroves in Pichavaram (Tamil Nadu) are valued at ₹3,535 million, while the Sundarbans (West Bengal) reach ₹664 billion. Carbon sequestration in the Sundarbans is worth ₹462 million annually, showing their vital ecological and economic role.

Technology for Mapping and Restoration

1. Advanced Monitoring Tools: Satellite and drone data, enhanced by geospatial AI, improve mangrove mapping and blue carbon estimates. These insights are essential for policy design and restoration planning.

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2. Community Inclusion in Data Efforts: Local communities with deep ecosystem knowledge must be recognised. Their livelihoods depend on mangroves, and they must be socially and economically included in decision-making.

Community-Led Conservation

1. Fisherfolk and Livelihoods: Mangroves act as fish nurseries, supporting sustainable fisheries. Coastal livelihoods are closely tied to healthy mangrove and estuarine ecosystems.

2. Urban Ecosystem Challenges: In cities like Mumbai and Chennai, mangroves suffer from pollution and degradation, harming biodiversity and livelihoods. Empowered communities that see direct benefits become lasting stewards.

3. Alternative Livelihoods: Mangroves can support aquaculture, beekeeping, and eco-tourism. Models like Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) can be adapted for urban contexts.

Citizen Science and Monitoring

1. Local Engagement: Training community members to monitor ecosystems can support or even replace formal monitoring. Mangrove health depends on river systems, sediments, and wetland linkages.

2. Health Indicators: Monitoring tools should assess mangrove area change, freshwater flow patterns, species diversity, and community dependence and perceptions.

Platforms for Sustainable Stewardship

1. Collaborative Engagement Models: Initiatives like "Mangrove Mitras" engage people in mangrove conservation. These platforms rebuild connections between people, wetlands, rivers, and mangroves.

2. A Coalition Approach: Mangrove health and human well-being are interconnected. Conservation must be a coalition of science, business, and community voices, treating mangroves as vital climate infrastructure.

Question for practice:

Discuss how mangrove ecosystems can contribute to sustainable development and climate resilience.

India has a long and proud democratic tradition

Source: The post India has a long and proud democratic tradition has been created, based on the article "A democracy grown at home" published in "Indian Express" on 2nd August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Constitutional value

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in Gangaikonda Cholapuram on July 27 reignited national pride in India's ancient democratic legacy, particularly referencing the Chola-era electoral system in Uthiramerur. His remarks challenge the narrative that democracy in India is a colonial import, instead highlighting its deep civilisational roots.

Rediscovering India's Indigenous Democratic Traditions

1. Democracy Before the West: PM Modi asserted that Indian democracy existed long before the Magna Carta. The Chola-era village of Uthiramerur demonstrated an organised voting system with defined rules and accountability, showing how deeply democracy was embedded in Indian tradition.

2. Historical Evidences Across Eras: Forms of participatory governance were evident from the fifth century BCE. Communities, villages, and tribal groups practiced decision-making through discussion. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* further mentioned samghas or local self-governing units.

3. Civilisational Pride in Democratic Practice: The historical reference is more than symbolic. It underscores democracy as part of India's civilisational identity, not a Western transplant.

Uthiramerur and the Chola Model of Elections

1. Comprehensive Electoral Framework: An inscription from 920 AD at the Vaikuntaperumal temple details the structure of wards, electoral qualifications, disqualification norms, committee formation, and even removal procedures. Villagers could recall elected representatives who failed their duties.

2. Ballot Pot System: A Transparent Method: The *kudavolai* or "ballot pot" system involved writing eligible candidates' names on palm leaves and drawing lots from a pot in public, by an impartial child. This ensured fairness and transparency in the process.

3. Representative Accountability: Elected members served one-year terms. Removal provisions were strict — any misconduct, including embezzlement or dereliction, led to disqualification for up to seven generations.

Strict Moral and Ethical Standards

1. Eligibility Grounded in Ethics: Candidates had to be between 35 and 70, own and live on tax-paying land, and be well-versed in scriptures or administration. These criteria ensured competence and community roots.

2. Disqualification Based on Conduct: Defaulters, alcohol users, and those involved in moral misconduct were barred from contesting. Even their close relatives were disqualified to uphold public integrity.

3. Higher Ethical Benchmarks: The system aimed to keep public life pure, contrasting sharply with today's reality where convicted politicians often return to office.

India's Democratic DNA

1. Beyond the Constitution: India's democratic ideals predate colonial rule, British Parliament, or the American Bill of Rights. Ancient republics like Vaishali and village democracies like Uthiramerur reflect a deep-rooted democratic culture.

2. Election Commission's Role: As the steward of the world's largest democratic exercise, the Election Commission must draw from this civilisational legacy to reinforce institutional trust.

3. A Timely Reminder: In a global era of democratic backsliding, recalling India's indigenous democratic roots affirms that its values of equity, participation, and accountability are homegrown and enduring.

Question for practice:

Examine how the ancient Chola electoral system reflects the core principles of modern democracy.

India must recognise repair as valuable knowledge

Source: The post India must recognise repair as valuable knowledge has been created, based on the article "The 'right to repair' must include 'right to remember'" published in "The Hindu" on 4th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context: India's adoption of a **Repairability Index** and updated **e-waste policies** in 2025 marks a shift toward sustainable electronics. However, a deeper transformation is needed—one that values informal repair work not just as service but as **vital, culturally rooted knowledge** essential for resilience and sustainability.

For detailed information on **India's Repairability Index aims to make electronic items more durable** [read this article here](#)

Recognising Repair as Knowledge Work

1. Beyond Policy Compliance: The government is advancing policies on **repairability and recycling**, but repair must be seen as a **form of knowledge**, not only a consumer right.

2. The Invisible Repair Economy: India's informal repair sector—from **Delhi's Karol Bagh to Chennai's Ritchie Street**—sustains devices long after their designed lifespan. Yet, it remains **excluded from policy frameworks**.

3. Tacit Knowledge and Material Resilience: Repairers use **muscle memory, sensory cues, and improvisation** rather than manuals. Their skills ensure **material resilience** and must be preserved.

Why Tacit Knowledge Matters

1. Learning by Doing: Skills are transferred through **mentorship and observation**, not formal training. This tacit method fosters **adaptability and creativity**, which standardised systems often lack.

2. Under-recognised Contribution to AI: AI systems increasingly benefit from insights drawn from such hands-on labour. However, those who contribute this **foundational knowledge** remain **largely unrecognised**.

3. Global and Indian Repair Initiatives: The **EU mandates** repair access, while India launched a **Right to Repair framework in 2022** and a **national portal in 2023**. Yet, repair must be viewed as **knowledge production**, not just a service.

Policy Gaps in India's Digital Strategy

1. E-Waste Rules and Repair Oversight: India generated **over 1.6 million tonnes of e-waste in 2021–22**, becoming the **third-largest producer**. While the 2022 rules promote **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**, they overlook **repair as prevention**.

2. Exclusion from Skilling Programmes: Schemes like **PMKVY** focus on industrial training. The improvisational nature of repair does not fit such frameworks, leaving informal repairers excluded.

3. Overlooked Workforce in Sustainability Campaigns: Campaigns like **Mission LiFE** encourage reuse but do not support the repairers who make this possible. **Policies risk sidelining them** while promoting circularity.

Repair as Sustainability and Design Principle

1. 'Unmaking' as Design Insight: The process of **disassembling, repairing, and reusing** reveals design flaws and reuse potential. Breakdowns become **feedback loops**, not failures.

2. Repairers at the Core of Circularity: They practice **daily reuse** and restoration, making circularity real. Recognising them reshapes our view of **innovation and sustainability**.

Aligning AI Policy with Repair Justice

1. Design for Repairability: Most modern gadgets are built for compactness, not repair. Only **23% of smartphones in Asia** are easily repairable. Design standards must embed **repairability from inception**.

2. Coordinated Institutional Action

Ministries can collaborate:

- **MeitY:** Add repairability to AI and procurement policy.
- **Consumer Affairs:** Expand Right to Repair with product classification.
- **Labour Ministry:** Use **e-Shram** to recognise informal repairers.
- **Skill Ministry:** Create training aligned with **tacit repair knowledge**.

3. Tech Tools for Knowledge Sharing: Decision trees and LLMs can structure and share tacit knowledge while preserving its context, enabling scalable learning.

A Human-Centred Repair Future

1. Valuing Embodied Labour: Repair work is **essential knowledge** that supports digital and material systems. Recognising it is key to a **just, inclusive tech future**.

2. Preserving the Non-Digital: As **Michael Polanyi, Hungarian-British scientist and philosopher**, observed, “We know more than we can tell.” By valuing what cannot be codified, we preserve the **human wisdom** vital to sustainable innovation.

Question for practice:

Examine how recognising informal repair work as knowledge can contribute to a sustainable and inclusive technological future in India.

India must simplify regulations to boost renewable energy growth

Source: The post India must simplify regulations to boost renewable energy growth has been created, based on the article “**For energy security, a redesign**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 4th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Infrastructure- energy

Context: India's energy security, once focused solely on fossil fuel access and affordability, now demands a broader approach. The country is navigating a dual-track transition—balancing fossil fuel dependency with its renewable energy ambitions—while targeting net zero carbon emissions by 2070.

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

India's Traditional Energy Strategy

1. Diversified Oil Imports: India has diversified its crude oil import sources. It notably resisted Western pressure by importing more Russian oil, reducing costs despite global crises like the Ukraine war and Gaza conflict.

2. Managing Fossil Fuel Demand: By focusing on demand management and energy efficiency, India has reduced the intensity of fossil fuel use per unit of GDP, improving overall energy sustainability.

3. Cost Benefits of Russian Crude: Between 2021–22 and 2024–25, Russian crude oil's share grew from 2.1% to 35.1%, lowering the average import cost by at least \$2 per barrel.

Progress and Challenges in Renewable Energy

1. Rapid Capacity Expansion: India's renewable energy capacity rose impressively from 19% to 49% of total electricity capacity (234 GW) in just five years. However, growth has recently slowed.

2. Transmission and Distribution Gaps: While generation has surged, the development of supporting infrastructure—like interstate transmission, storage systems, and distribution networks—lags behind.

3. The “Usable” Capacity Challenge: Generation capacity is not enough. Usability requires seamless grid integration, balanced distribution, and clear standards—highlighted by Spain's blackout caused by interconnectivity faults.

Regulatory Hurdles and Compliance Burden

1. Excessive Compliance Requirements: A TeamLease RegTech study cited by economist Swaminathan Aiyar notes 2,735 compliance obligations across 35 governments and 30 departments. Many relate to labour, land, environment, and safety.

2. Manual Processes and Bureaucratic Delays: Sixty percent of compliance requires manual form-filling and physical visits. Even a 1 MW solar plant may need over 100 clearances with frequent inspections, renewals, and certifications.

3. Comparison with Past Experiences: A past Shell fuel retail project in Mumbai needed 58 approvals and took 12 months—highlighting persistent red tape. Such delays risk derailing India's 2035 target of 500 GW usable renewable energy.

Structural Advantages of Renewable Sources

1. Unlimited Natural Inputs: Unlike fossil fuels tied to geology, renewable resources like sun and wind are abundant and accessible without structural constraints.

2. Viable Technology and Investor Interest: Solar and wind technologies are mature and economically viable, with strong investor interest. Regulatory streamlining is the main barrier to scaling up.

Need for Systemic Regulatory Reform

1. Fragmented Authority and Lack of Accountability: Multiple agencies and regulators operate without a central executive authority, leading to inefficiency and lack of coherence in the sector.

2. Scope for Rationalisation: The government can consolidate oversight, standardise technical norms, ease land acquisition, digitise processes, and improve transparency in tariffs and dispute resolution.

3. Overcoming Vested Interests: While legacy interests pose challenges, determined political will can drive the simplification needed for energy self-reliance and sustainable growth.

Question for practice:

Discuss how regulatory complexities are affecting the growth of renewable energy in India.

Empathy builds better leaders and stronger workplaces

Source: The post Empathy builds better leaders and stronger workplaces has been created, based on the article “It Profits to Be Kind” published in “The Economic Times” on 4th August 2025

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UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper4-Work culture

Context: In the rush to embrace speed, innovation, and digital transformation, many organisations have overlooked the importance of human connection. This article calls for a rethinking of workplace culture by integrating empathy and kindness as essential elements of leadership and corporate functioning.

The Pitfall of Hyper-Productivity Culture

1. **Speed and Metrics Over Humanity:** Modern businesses celebrate disruption, efficiency, and KPIs. In doing so, they often treat people as mere tools, neglecting emotional well-being.
2. **The Myth of the Tough Leader:** The archetype of the harsh boss who demands instant results still dominates corporate stories. While they may achieve goals, they often leave behind demoralised, burnt-out teams.
3. **Consequences of Fear-Driven Culture:** Leadership rooted in fear ultimately fails. It leads to high attrition and emotional exhaustion. Sustainable leadership needs emotional intelligence and compassion.

The Role and Dimensions of Empathy

1. **Three Types of Empathy:** Stanford psychologist *Jamil Zaki* identifies:
 - *Cognitive empathy* – understanding others' feelings
 - *Emotional empathy* – sharing those feelings
 - *Compassionate empathy* – acting on those feelings
2. **Empathy as Organisational Glue:** Empathy is compared to Wi-Fi—often invisible but vital. When absent, organisational systems break down.
3. **Empathy as a Leadership Strength:** Empathetic leaders foster healthier, more cohesive workplaces. It's a skill that can be developed, not an innate trait.

Tangible Benefits of Empathetic Workplaces

1. **Lower Attrition and Higher Retention:** Understanding employees' needs reduces turnover. Retaining talent through empathy saves cost and improves morale.
2. **Enhanced Innovation Through Safety:** Creative risks thrive only when psychological safety exists. Empathy enables this environment.
3. **Stronger Reputation in Public Eye:** In the age of social media, toxic work cultures are quickly exposed. Empathetic cultures earn lasting loyalty and brand value.

Practising Everyday Empathy at Work

1. **Real-Life Examples of Kindness:** Empathy appears in small gestures—rescheduling meetings, offering dignity in feedback, and supporting personal challenges.
2. **Support for Women at Work:** Empathy is crucial for gender inclusivity. It helps women navigate caregiving roles, maternity, and participate freely in professional spaces.
3. **Living the Value, Not Just Preaching It:** Kindness must be demonstrated daily—celebrating efforts, writing thank-you notes, or showing concern for others' well-being.

Shifting Expectations and Generational Demands

1. **Changing Workforce Priorities:** Gen Z and millennials seek purpose-driven organisations that care for emotional health. They value managers who listen and engage meaningfully.
2. **Data Supporting Emotional Engagement:** A May 2025 Deloitte study shows 69% of employees would work harder if appreciated. Gallup (2018) found 21% higher profitability in teams with engaged leaders.
3. **Lessons from the Pandemic:** COVID-19 taught that human connection, not speed alone, defines memorable leadership during crises.

Institutionalising Empathy for the Future

1. **From Acts to Systems:** Individual empathy must evolve into structured practices. Policies on mental health, parental leave, and team transitions should reflect this shift.
2. **Humour as a Leadership Tool:** Used sensitively, humour can ease tension and build connection. When combined with empathy, it becomes a powerful asset.
3. **Embedding Empathy in Strategy:** Empathy should be treated as a core organisational asset—measured, preserved, and reflected in every decision.

Question for practice:

Discuss how empathy can enhance leadership and workplace culture.

Coordinated monetary and fiscal policies sustain India's growth momentum

Source: The post Coordinated monetary and fiscal policies sustain India's growth momentum has been created, based on the article “Towards an Indian growth model — III” published in “Businessline” on 5th August 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Context: India's macroeconomic challenges require a shift in how monetary and fiscal policies are coordinated to support stable, long-term growth. Recent experience after the pandemic shows that careful countercyclical macroeconomic management can help reduce inflation and sustain growth, even amid global shocks.

Rethinking Macroeconomic Strategy

1. **Shift from Structural to Stabilisation Focus:** India has often emphasized long-term structural reforms while neglecting short-term stabilisation. This made the economy vulnerable to large growth swings during shocks. A more balanced approach is now needed.
2. **Countercyclical Policies Show Promise:** Post-pandemic policy responses demonstrated that countercyclical tools, adapted to domestic structures and shocks, can simultaneously reduce inflation and boost growth. This provides a foundation for new coordination strategies.

Principles of Monetary-Fiscal Coordination

1. **Coordinated Role in Supporting Growth:** Fiscal policy targeting supply-side inflation enables monetary policy to maintain low real interest rates that encourage demand. This coordination is consistent with central bank independence if inflation remains low.

2. Fiscal Consolidation and Quality Spending: India's high debt and fiscal deficit limit room for demand-driven stimulus. Therefore, fiscal policy should focus on infrastructure, social welfare, and productivity to raise potential non-inflationary growth.

3. Supply-Side Focus without Neglecting Demand: Well-structured fiscal measures—supporting income growth, innovation, and exports—stimulate broader demand while addressing supply constraints. This combination strengthens overall macroeconomic balance.

4. Encouraging Federal Competition: Politically sensitive reforms, like liberalizing factor markets, are best left to states. Inter-state competition can gradually drive efficiency without central imposition.

Designing a Growth-Oriented Monetary Policy

1. Real Rates Should Support Growth: Monetary policy should aim for low but positive real interest rates—around 1%—to maintain borrowing incentives while ensuring returns to savers. Higher rates, as seen in the 2010s and 2024, dampen growth.

2. Importance of Anchored Inflation: Stable inflation under flexible inflation targeting reduces rate volatility. Fine-tuned policy adjustments can maintain real rates close to neutral, smoothing growth and reacting efficiently to shocks.

3. Growth Fuels Savings More Than High Rates: Long-term resource mobilisation improves when incomes rise with growth, rather than through high real interest rates. Financial deepening also aids efficient allocation of savings.

Calibrating Current Monetary Policy

1. Real Rates Too High Despite Rate Cuts: Even after recent cuts, India's real interest rates exceed 3%. Had inflation forecasts been more accurate, rate hikes would have been milder. Current high rates are slowing growth.

2. Need for More Front-Loaded Cuts: For large deviations from the equilibrium real rate, quick front-loaded cuts are preferable. The recent 50 bps cut was appropriate, but further adjustment may still be required.

3. Misplaced Inflation Expectations: Forecasts assume future inflation will rise due to base effects, but core inflation excluding gold is already below 3.5%. With inflation likely anchored near 4%, another 25 bps cut is justified.

Ensuring a Smooth Policy Landing

1. Use of Data-Driven Neutral Stance: A neutral policy stance signals flexibility. Monetary response should be guided by high-frequency data pointing to slowing growth and external shocks, not temporary food price volatility.

2. Careful Liquidity Management: Short-term liquidity adjustments should maintain the call money rate close to the repo. Durable liquidity should stay mildly in surplus to absorb external liquidity shocks without causing market instability.

3. Metaphor of Smooth Landing: As with an aircraft's landing, policy adjustments must now be gentle and well-timed to ensure stability while achieving growth close to potential.

Question for practice:

Examine how coordinated monetary and fiscal policies can support stable and sustained economic growth in India.

India needs fair battery recycling norms for growth

Source: The post India needs fair battery recycling norms for growth has been created, based on the article “**The missing link in India’s battery waste management**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 5th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment Conservation

Context: India’s push toward decarbonisation has rapidly increased the demand for lithium batteries, driven by the growth of electric vehicles and renewable energy. However, without strong recycling mechanisms, this expansion risks significant environmental damage and economic losses. The article discusses how India’s Battery Waste Management Rules must evolve to support a sustainable circular economy.

For detailed information on **Government notifies Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022** [read this article here](#)

India’s Battery Boom and Emerging Waste Crisis

1. Rising Demand for Lithium Batteries: India’s lithium battery demand is projected to grow from 4 GWh in 2023 to 139 GWh by 2035. This surge is fueled by the expansion of electric vehicles (EVs) and battery energy storage systems (BESS) under India’s Net Zero goal.

2. Environmental Risks of Improper Disposal: Disposal of lithium batteries without recycling leads to leakage of hazardous materials. In 2022 alone, lithium batteries made up 7,00,000 metric tonnes out of 1.6 million metric tonnes of e-waste.

3. Need for Regulatory Response: To manage this crisis, the Battery Waste Management Rules (BWMR), 2022, were introduced. These aim to ensure environmentally safe disposal and promote recycling practices.

Challenges of Implementing EPR and Floor Pricing

1. Role of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): The BWMR introduced EPR, where producers must ensure battery collection and recycling. Producers rely on authorised recyclers to meet their EPR targets and obtain EPR certificates.

2. Inadequate EPR Floor Price: The floor price for EPR certificates is currently too low. This discourages proper investment in safe recycling infrastructure, technologies, and skilled labour.

3. Economic Viability and Market Distortion: Low pricing drives out legitimate recyclers and incentivises informal or fraudulent actors. These players may dump waste or issue false certificates, similar to what occurred in India’s plastic waste sector.

4. Strategic Risks from Import Dependency: Improper recycling hampers recovery of critical materials like lithium, nickel, and cobalt, increasing India’s foreign exchange losses—projected to cross \$1 billion by 2030.

Need for a Fair and Transparent Pricing System

1. Producer Resistance and Global Disparity: Large producers often evade environmental responsibilities in developing countries. They follow more lenient practices compared to those in developed nations.

2. Affordability and Consumer Impact: Raising the EPR floor price does not necessarily increase consumer costs. Despite falling global metal prices, producers have not reduced product prices, showing capacity to absorb recycling expenses.

3. Global Comparisons and Policy Reform: The UK charges nearly ₹600/kg for EV battery recycling, while India's proposed rate is under one-fourth—even after adjusting for purchasing power. India needs globally comparable pricing based on real recycling costs.

Strengthening Compliance and Formalising Informal Sector

1. Need for Better Enforcement: India must digitise EPR certificate tracking, enforce stricter audits, and impose penalties for fraud. This will improve transparency and accountability in recycling.

2. Integrating Informal Recyclers: Training and regulatory support for informal recyclers can reduce unsafe practices and expand recycling capacity, turning a liability into a growth opportunity.

3. Strategic and Economic Priority: Battery recycling reform is not only about environmental safety—it is a strategic need. With proper reforms, battery waste can fuel green growth and support India's circular economy ambitions.

Question for practice:

Discuss the emerging challenges and opportunities in battery recycling in India.

India should pivot Myanmar policy to democracy and security

Source: The post India should pivot Myanmar policy to democracy and security has been created, based on the article “**Why a progressive Indian policy on Myanmar is more than plausible**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 5th August 2025

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

Context: Three years after Myanmar's military coup, India maintains formal ties with the junta, despite widespread killings and displacement. New Delhi has ignored Myanmar's democratic resistance and defended its policy as serving national “interests”. The article urges India to adopt a values-based foreign policy rooted in democracy and human security.

For detailed information on **India-Myanmar Relations Amid Myanmar Civil War** [read this article here](#)

Rethinking Interests and Values in Foreign Policy

1. Blurring the Line Between Interests and Values: Foreign policy rarely separates “interests” from “values” clearly, as both are subjectively defined. India's current Myanmar approach treats “interests” narrowly, ignoring how democratic values can advance national goals.

2. A Progressive Shift in Perspective: India can redefine its “interests” by promoting democratic values like federalism and human security. Supporting Myanmar's resistance aligns with India's own democratic identity and enhances its regional standing.

3. Aligning with Democratic Aspirations: India has long served as a democratic model for Myanmar's civil society. A shift to a values-based policy offers both strategic benefits and moral legitimacy.

Leveraging Democratic Federalism as Strategic Soft Power

1. India's Democratic Model as a Regional Asset: India's identity as a federal democracy can be used to influence Myanmar's opposition forces seeking a new federal constitution. This distinguishes India from China.

2. Supporting Pro-Democracy Groups: India should actively support the National Unity Government, civil society, and ethnic resistance groups through training and institutional collaboration. This can help them build capacity and democratic institutions.

3. Outmanoeuvring China with Federalism: China can offer military hardware, but not democratic federalism. India can gain influence by selling ideas and cooperation, offering a unique advantage in the region.

Ending Support for the Myanmar Junta

1. Halt Weapon Transfers Immediately: Despite the junta's brutal tactics, India has continued to supply it with military equipment. Justice For Myanmar reports transfers of 52 items, including communication parts, in January 2024.

2. Curb Naval Fuel Sales: Investigations reveal India sold over \$1.5 million in navy-grade diesel to junta-linked entities. These sales must be stopped to prevent misuse against civilians.

3. Cutting Military Ties as a Moral Imperative: Since the Myanmar military uses all its forces against civilians, India's continued support contradicts its democratic image and strategic interests.

Opening Humanitarian Corridors

1. Urgent Need for Border Relief: Conflict zones like Sagaing, Chin, and Rakhine face massive displacement. India should open cross-border humanitarian corridors to provide food, medicines, and shelter.

2. Reinstatement of the Free Movement Regime (FMR): The government must revoke the border fencing plan and restore FMR, suspended in February 2024, to allow emergency assistance.

3. Collaborate with Local and International Networks: India should partner with NGOs and adopt Thailand's best practices in cross-border aid, ensuring aid reaches civilians, not the junta.

Ensuring Protection for Refugees

1. Stop Deportation and Detention of Asylum Seekers: Manipur has deported 115 asylum seekers; Assam holds 27 Chin refugees. India must treat them as refugees, not illegal immigrants.

2. Follow Non-Refoulement Principle: Even without ratifying the 1951 Refugee Convention, India is bound by customary international law to avoid deporting people to danger zones.

3. Legal and Humanitarian Obligations: Both the Constitution and international norms allow India to protect refugees. Humane shelters should replace detentions to uphold India's claimed moral leadership.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's current Myanmar policy balances national interests with democratic values and human security.

Reimagining India's Digital Welfare through Democratic Lens

Source: The post Reimagining India's Digital Welfare through Democratic Lens has been created, based on the article "The technocratic calculus of India's welfare state" published in "The Hindu" on 6th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

Context: India's welfare model is becoming increasingly technocratic, driven by Aadhaar-based schemes and data algorithms. While promising efficiency and scale, this shift raises critical concerns about the erosion of democratic deliberation, rights-based entitlements, and political accountability. The article explores whether this model supports true welfare or risks excluding those it aims to serve.

Technocratic Transformation of Welfare

- 1. Shift from Rights to Efficiency:** India's welfare approach now prioritises efficiency over entitlements. With 1,206 DBT-linked schemes and Aadhaar enrolment crossing a billion, focus has shifted from "who needs support" to "how to reduce leakage," ignoring the complexity of welfare as a constitutional right.
- 2. Emergence of Data-Driven Rationality:** Welfare policies now embody measurable, streamlined rationality. Influenced by Habermas's technocratic consciousness and Foucault's governmentality, schemes like E-SHRAM and PM-KISAN avoid ambiguity and operate with a one-way, audit-driven logic.
- 3. Decline of Deliberative Practices:** Democratic debate and community input are fading. Welfare no longer acts as a forum for participatory planning. The rights-bearing citizen is now reduced to a passive, auditable beneficiary, echoing Agamben's *homo sacer* — stripped of political voice.

Diminishing Political Accountability

- 1. Fiscal Austerity and Shrinking Welfare:** Social sector spending has declined to a decade-low 17% in 2024–25, compared to the previous decade's 21% average. Key sectors like minority welfare, labour, and nutrition dropped from 11% (pre-COVID) to 3% (post-COVID), contradicting claims of a socialistic state.
- 2. Crisis in the RTI Regime:** The Right to Information Act is weakening. As of June 2024, over 4 lakh appeals were pending across 29 Information Commissions, and eight CIC positions remained vacant—reflecting administrative apathy and eroding transparency.
- 3. Centralised Grievance Systems and Algorithmic Insulation:** The Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System resolved lakhs of complaints (2022–24). However, it centralises visibility while weakening responsibility. The federal structure is reduced to a flat ticketing mechanism, evading deeper political accountability.

Philosophical and Judicial Warnings

- 1. Rancière's Democratic Lens:** Democracy depends on making suffering visible and contestable, not just computable. The current model neglects the voices of the marginalised and reduces welfare to technical administration.
- 2. Justice Chandrachud's Aadhaar Dissent:** In his 2018 dissent, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud cautioned against depersonalising citizens into machinic data. He warned that decontextualised identity systems can exclude care, context, and constitutional protections.

Reimagining Democratic Welfare

1. Democratic Antifragility and Federal Design: Governance must be redesigned to withstand stress, drawing on Taleb's concept of antifragility. States should build context-specific, pluralistic welfare models that reinforce both federalism and democracy.

2. Community-Driven Impact and Feedback: Institutionalising community-led audits through Gram Panchayat Development Plans and Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan can enhance responsiveness. Kerala's Kudumbashree serves as a model for platform cooperatives and local engagement.

3. Restoring Democratic Partnership: Citizens must be recognised as partners in governance, not just data entries. Civil society must invest in grassroots education and legal aid. Embedding offline fallback systems, bias audits, and the "right to explanation" in digital systems is essential for democratic digital welfare.

Question for practice:

Examine how the shift towards a technocratic welfare model in India has impacted democratic deliberation and political accountability.

Money laundering cases are rising but convictions remain low

Source: The post Money laundering cases are rising but convictions remain low has been created, based on the article "How should money laundering be tackled?" published in "The Hindu" on 6th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- money-laundering and its prevention.

Context:: A recent Rajya Sabha report reveals that only 15 convictions have resulted from 5,892 cases investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) since 2015. This low conviction rate, coupled with a rising number of cases, raises concerns about the law's implementation and growing financial crimes.

For detailed information on **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)**- [read this article here](#)

Understanding the Concept and Process of Money Laundering

1. Definition and Meaning: Money laundering, under Section 3 of the PMLA, involves concealing or disguising the origin of money derived from criminal activity, and projecting it as clean or legitimate. It affects financial integrity and national sovereignty.

2. Three Stages of Laundering: The process begins with *placement*, where illicit funds enter the financial system, often broken into smaller amounts (*smurfing*). In the *layering* stage, money is moved through complex transactions. Finally, in *integration*, it reenters the economy via real estate or businesses.

3. Origins of the Term Laundromat: The term stems from U.S. crime syndicates using laundromats to disguise illegal earnings. In modern terms, a laundromat can be a bank or financial service company used to hide ownership, embezzle funds, or move illicit money offshore.

Legal Framework Governing Money Laundering in India

1. Genesis and International Context: PMLA was enacted following the 1990 UN Political Declaration. Its aim is to curb money laundering and confiscate associated assets. The law places the burden of proof on the accused, marking a tough legal stance.

2. Initiation of Proceedings and ECIR: As clarified in *Vir Bhadra Singh vs ED (2017)*, no FIR is needed to start proceedings under the Act. An Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) suffices, provided there's a *scheduled offence* involved.

3. Supreme Court's Interpretation: In *P. Chidambaram vs ED (2019)*, the Court warned that money laundering weakens the financial system and fuels inflation. The *Vijay Madanlal Chaudhury vs Union of India (2022)* case

clarified that property attachment under Section 5 can occur without a pre-registered case, which has opened doors for potential misuse.

Key Concerns in Implementation and Misuse

- 1. Low Conviction Rate and Rising Cases:** Despite nearly 6,000 cases investigated since 2015, only 15 convictions have occurred. This reflects poorly on enforcement and legal follow-through.
- 2. Scope for Misuse and Political Targeting:** Instances of politically motivated misuse have emerged. The Supreme Court has flagged such issues, noting how property attachments are often made without foundational criminal charges.
- 3. Need for Better Safeguards:** FATF guidelines stress caution in investigations to prevent harassment and ensure only genuine cases are prosecuted. Misuse of law erodes its credibility and effectiveness.

Strengthening the Legal and International Response

- 1. Role of DTAA and Global Cooperation:** India's Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA) with around 85 countries enable exchange of financial data and aid in checking tax evasion and laundering.
- 2. Tackling Terror Financing and Systemic Risks:** Money laundering often funds terror. Effective enforcement is not just a legal necessity but a national security imperative. Political neutrality in application is essential for law's credibility.
- 3. Urgent Need for Reforms:** Despite legal provisions and global cooperation, much remains to be done. The government must enhance conviction rates, prevent misuse, and ensure the law's application is transparent and just.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges in implementing the Prevention of Money Laundering Act effectively in India.

Necropolitics decides which lives matter and which don't

Source: The post Necropolitics decides which lives matter and which don't has been created, based on the article "Necropolitics: who is allowed to live and who may die" published in "The Hindu" on 6th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.— their forms and effect on the society.

Context: The article explores the concept of *necropolitics*, which explains how political systems determine whose lives are valued and whose deaths are ignored. Triggered by global apathy toward violence in regions like Kashmir or Gaza, it challenges the politics of selective mourning and systemic abandonment.

Understanding Necropolitics

- 1. Defining Necropolitics:** Necropolitics is the political control over life and death, especially targeting marginalised groups. Coined by historian Achille Mbembe, it reveals how states deliberately expose some lives—like refugees, racial minorities, or the poor—to suffering and death.
- 2. From Biopolitics to Necropolitics:** Biopolitics, as defined by Michel Foucault, governs life through health and population control. Mbembe extends this, arguing biopolitics fails to explain systemic death. Necropolitics, instead, highlights how power decides who may die and whose suffering is ignored.

3. **Structural, Not Spectacular:** Unlike older sovereign powers, necropolitics is institutional and global. It erases dignity, normalises death, and governs through policies, not public executions. Examples include colonial famines and abandoned populations in camps and slums.

Mechanisms of Necropolitical Control

1. **Instruments of Violence:** Necropolitics uses tools like surveillance, imprisonment, and starvation. States may work with militias or criminal groups. These actions are often justified using nationalism, religion, or utilitarian logic.

2. **Sustained State Terror:** Violence is not momentary but continuous. War and terrorism become economic systems, while targeted groups face structural erasure. Communities may be displaced under the guise of development or security.

3. **Invisible Deaths:** Deaths caused by starvation, medical neglect, or slow violence are not accidents. They are politically managed. For instance, many queer, trans, and working-class people during the HIV/AIDS crisis were left to die, their deaths unacknowledged.

Producing the State of Exception

1. **Inventing the Enemy:** States often invent enemies to justify extraordinary measures. These “threats” enable surveillance and control, turning suspicion into policy. Targets may include people based on religion, caste, or appearance.

2. **Law Without Rights:** In these spaces, legality is suspended. Giorgio Agamben’s idea of the “state of exception” becomes permanent for many. Here, death is not lawlessness but the method of governance.

3. **Administrative Death:** Decisions like who gets aid or who is punished become mechanisms of control. Logistics, not justice, determine who lives with dignity and who dies invisibly.

Living Death and Death Worlds

1. **The Living Dead:** Necropolitics also creates conditions where people live in extreme neglect. Migrant workers during India’s COVID-19 lockdown died from hunger and exhaustion—victims of structural abandonment, not disease.

2. **Zones of Abandonment:** Death worlds are areas where life is unstable and lawless. Gaza, after Israeli strikes in 2023, became one such example. Civilian deaths were dismissed, and silence followed—a clear display of necropolitical thinking.

Everyday Necropolitics

1. **Bureaucratized Violence:** Not all necropolitics uses bombs. Policies like caste-based sterilisation drives, racial profiling databases, and cruel detention practices quietly discard lives under legal cover.

2. **Global Apathy:** Necropolitics thrives in global silence. Even as civilians die in conflicts, the world looks away. The routine acceptance of these deaths reflects how deeply abandonment is embedded in global politics.

3. **Path to Resistance:** The goal of resistance must go beyond mere survival. It should seek lives that are recognised, respected, and mourned—where all deaths are treated as tragedies, not as routine.

Question for practice:

Discuss how necropolitics shapes which lives are valued and which are discarded.

India's struggle to adapt to global techno-capitalism

Source: The post India's struggle to adapt to global techno-capitalism has been created, based on the article "**The new techno-capitalism**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 6th August 2025

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

Context: India's quiet commemoration of the SITE experiment's 50th anniversary highlights its early ambition in tech-driven development. However, new global shifts—led by a radical transformation in American techno-capitalism under Donald Trump—are forcing India to re-evaluate its strategy in science, innovation, and talent export.

SITE and the Legacy of Tech Cooperation

- 1. A Symbol of Developmental Idealism:** SITE, launched in 1975, aimed to deliver educational content via satellite to underserved Indian villages. It was a collaborative effort between ISRO and NASA and emphasized technology's role in development.
- 2. From Collaboration to Caution:** Following India's 1974 nuclear test, U.S.-India cooperation cooled due to non-proliferation concerns. Decades later, mutual trust was rebuilt, culminating in the ICET initiative under President Biden in 2023.
- 3. Emerging Divergences:** Despite ICET, U.S.-India ties face stress from disagreements on global politics. More fundamentally, their technological ecosystems are drifting apart in structure and ambition.

Shifting Tech Models in the US, China, and India

- 1. The Rise of American Techno-Capitalism:** Since the SITE era, U.S. technology has become increasingly privatized. SpaceX now leads in launches, overtaking NASA. The government acts more as a facilitator than a central planner.
- 2. China's Centralised Tech Strategy:** China follows a state-led, mission-driven approach. Massive investments in education, research, and space have made it a global tech rival, especially in AI and space exploration.
- 3. India's Middle Path:** India has initiated reforms to energize its tech sector, particularly space. However, it lacks the dynamism of the U.S. private sector and the strategic focus of China's state-driven model.

Trump's Techno-Capitalism and Its Global Impact

- 1. An Ideological Shift in Washington:** Trump's approach contrasts with Biden's regulatory stance. His policies give Big Tech full freedom, aligning the American state with Silicon Valley's libertarian elite.
- 2. The AI and Crypto Push:** The Trump administration's 2025 AI policy dismantles barriers, fosters AI-led manufacturing, and mobilizes massive investment. The GENIUS Act promotes stablecoin use to strengthen the dollar's dominance and counter de-dollarisation.
- 3. Tech as Geopolitical Tool:** By setting up a Strategic Bitcoin Reserve and halting prosecutions of crypto firms, Trump's policies aim to secure strategic advantage—not just economic growth.

Philosophical Foundations and Power Alliances

- 1. Thiel's Influence and Ideological Core:** Peter Thiel, a key Trump ally, champions deregulated innovation driven by entrepreneurs. His philosophy merges nationalism with libertarianism, casting China as a rival.

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2. **End of 1990s Tech Optimism:** The internet once promised decentralisation and state retreat. Instead, governments reasserted power, and today, a new “tech broligarchy” sees the state and tech elites united for strategic dominance.

3. **Trump’s Global Reconfiguration:** This alliance underpins a broader project to reshape global trade, finance, and security. If the AI boom materializes, the U.S. will cement its economic leadership.

India’s Emerging Tech Dilemma

1. **Threats to India’s IT Workforce:** India’s IT sector, a global success story, faces risks from AI-led job automation and U.S. visa restrictions under Trump. These trends threaten the country’s export of tech talent.

3. **Urgent Need for Policy Response:** India must revamp its tech ecosystem by investing in research, boosting private sector participation, and preparing its institutions and workforce for future technological upheavals.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the rise of American techno-capitalism poses strategic and economic challenges for India’s technological future.

China tries to block India from rising in manufacturing

Source: The post China tries to block India from rising in manufacturing has been created, based on the article “Decoding China — the lessons for a vulnerable India” published in “The Hindu” on 7th August 2025

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

Context: The sudden withdrawal of over 300 Chinese engineers from Foxconn’s iPhone 17 plants in India has raised alarm. More than an internal reshuffle, this move signals a calculated Chinese strategy to stall India’s manufacturing rise and protect Beijing’s dominant regional economic position.

For detailed information on **China blocks Foxconn shift and India gains global ground** [read this article here](#)

China’s Strategic Withdrawal and Resource Control

1. **Targeted Recall of Technical Expertise:** The removal of trained Chinese engineers hampers India’s ability to absorb critical manufacturing know-how. These specialists were vital for establishing advanced production systems and facilitating technology transfer.

2. **Restricting Key Mineral and Equipment Exports:** China has restricted exports of vital minerals such as gallium, graphite, and rare earths, essential for EVs and electronics. It has also imposed informal curbs on high-end capital equipment, further limiting India’s industrial capability.

3. **Disrupting India’s Supply Chains Subtly:** Many restrictions are informal—executed via verbal instructions or bureaucratic delays. This non-transparent approach effectively raises uncertainty, costs, and dependency in Indian manufacturing.

4. **Preventing Technological Self-Reliance:** The overarching goal is to block India from developing an independent, high-value manufacturing base. By withholding tools, skills, and materials, China maintains India’s reliance on Chinese systems and products.

Motivations Rooted in China’s Economic Fragility

1. **Dependence on Export Revenues:** Facing demographic decline, a property crisis, and falling domestic demand, China is increasingly reliant on exports to sustain economic stability and fund its social systems.

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2. Managing Structural Imbalances: China's trade surplus reflects its industrial overcapacity and poor internal consumption. To sustain production, it undercuts global prices, pushing out rivals and preserving export volumes.

3. Internal Pressures Shaping External Moves: Beijing's moves against India stem not just from rivalry but internal compulsions. If India succeeds in becoming globally competitive, China may resort to stronger measures, including economic coercion or even military pressure.

4. Western Signals and Strategic Doubts: U.S. tariff hikes on Indian goods, while sparing China temporarily, weaken India's appeal as an alternative supply chain hub. This underscores the unpredictability of global alignments and the need for India's strategic autonomy.

Beijing's Control of Global Supply Chains

1. Dominance Across Emerging Technologies: China controls key sectors like AI, 6G, EVs, and quantum computing. It shapes global supply chains and turns its production scale and overcapacity into instruments of power.

2. Using Overcapacity as a Weapon: Firms like BYD flood global markets with low-cost products. This strategic dumping suppresses competition and reinforces China's industrial dominance.

3. Economic Statecraft in Action: Price suppression and export-led tactics are not isolated business strategies but deliberate statecraft. China defends its markets and marginalises competitors before they can gain scale.

India's Industrial Challenges and Lessons

1. Dependence on Foreign Inputs: India still relies on imports for basic components like semiconductors, chips, and engines. Even basic assembly operations need external help, showing gaps in capability.

2. Systemic Hurdles to Growth: Infrastructure gaps and bureaucratic inefficiencies continue to limit India's ability to scale manufacturing. The ambition to lead remains hindered by on-ground realities.

3. Reality Check on Global Competition: India's challenge to China is more aspirational than real for now. China's moves are defensive but calculated—aimed at stalling long-term threats rather than countering an immediate rival.

4. Need for Strategic Focus: India must focus on strengthening its fundamentals. Competing with China requires self-sufficiency, efficient systems, and reduced import dependence—not just global goodwill.

India's Road Ahead

1. Lessons from Beijing's Moves: China's aggressive posture teaches India the importance of internal strength. Without robust domestic capacity, India's manufacturing dreams will remain vulnerable to external manipulation.

2. Strategic Autonomy is Essential: To avoid being caught in global power games, India needs to chart its own course—building resilience, investing in critical capabilities, and reducing strategic dependencies.

Question for practice:

Examine how China is using economic tools to hinder India's rise as a global manufacturing hub.

Election boycotts weaken democracy and empower unchallenged ruling parties

Source: The post Election boycotts weaken democracy and empower unchallenged ruling parties has been created, based on the article “**Absence is abdication**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 7th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Context: Recent calls for election boycotts in Bihar, triggered by concerns over the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR), have reignited a debate about the effectiveness of boycotts as political strategy. The article examines historical, regional, and global instances to argue that boycotts usually weaken democracy rather than strengthen it.

The Recurrent Failure of Election Boycotts

1. Historical Lessons from the Region: In 2014, Bangladesh's opposition BNP boycotted elections fearing state capture. As a result, the ruling party won 153 seats uncontested, despite BNP's strong electoral prospects. The boycott led to years of political marginalisation.

2. India's Own Experiences: Punjab's 1992 boycott by the Akali Dal led to extremely low voter turnout and handed the Congress an easy win. Similar cases in Jammu and Kashmir and central India showed that boycotts failed to halt elections and only reduced broader representation.

3. Global Examples of Political Setbacks: Venezuela's multiple boycotts enabled the ruling regime to dominate elections and gain supermajorities. Zimbabwe's 2008 withdrawal allowed Mugabe to win unopposed. Even international criticism failed to reverse these outcomes.

4. The Rare Exception: Serbia in 2000 shows a contrasting example where contesting and protesting election fraud led to the fall of Slobodan Milosevic. But this remains an exception, not the norm.

Implications of Election Boycotts

1. Elections Continue Regardless: India's Constitution does not invalidate elections due to low turnout. The EC must proceed with polls and declare results based on polled votes. Boycotts merely clear the path for incumbents.

2. Low Turnout Dilutes Mandates: When opposition exits the field, ruling parties often win with wafer-thin mandates, weakening democratic legitimacy and broad representation.

3. Symbolic but Ineffective Protests: Boycotts may express discontent, but their practical consequence is usually the absence of challenge and accountability in the democratic process.

Concerns About Electoral Integrity

1. SIR and Public Distrust: In Bihar, critics claim that the SIR process enables mass deletion of voter names, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups. Lack of transparency in verification has increased public suspicion.

2. Need for Robust Scrutiny: The EC must urgently address these concerns by ensuring transparency, proper grievance redressal, and restoring trust in electoral rolls.

3. Role of Institutions and Media: Civil society, the media, and the judiciary must remain vigilant and press for fair procedures instead of abandoning the electoral space.

Parliamentary Boycotts and Legislative Weakness

1. **Disruptions Without Debate:** Walkouts by Opposition parties have allowed governments to pass crucial legislation—like the 2020 farm bills—without scrutiny. Such tactics undermine parliamentary responsibility.
2. **Comparative Lessons from Neighbours:** Bangladesh and Pakistan experienced similar patterns. Prolonged boycotts helped ruling parties legislate freely, weakening checks and balances.
3. **Loss of Democratic Forums:** Parliament is the core platform for democratic challenge. Leaving it empty deprives citizens of debate and exposes governance to unchecked authority.

Participation as a Democratic Imperative

1. **Constructive Engagement Over Absence:** Effective opposition requires presence in both elections and legislatures. Boycotts may be emotionally satisfying but are politically counterproductive.
2. **Strength in Staying, Not Leaving:** History favours those who fight within democratic spaces. Walking away surrenders both the political arena and the public narrative to the ruling party.
3. **A Call to Reconsider:** The article concludes that democracy depends on vigilant, active participation. Boycotts serve only to weaken the very institutions they aim to protect.

Question for practice:

Examine the effectiveness of election and parliamentary boycotts as a political strategy in democracies, with reference to historical and contemporary examples.

Pension funds must help build green economy

Source: The post Pension funds must help build green economy has been created, based on the article “**Pension funds should prepare for climate risk**” published in “**Businessline**” on 7th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment conservation

Context: India's green transition to achieve net-zero by 2070 demands \$10–12.5 trillion in mitigation investment, plus \$100 billion annually for adaptation. While banks are central to green finance discussions, pension funds — managing over \$600 billion — remain underutilized. Their long investment horizon and financial scale make them ideal for climate finance participation.

India's Climate Finance Needs

1. **Massive Capital Requirements:** India's green transition needs trillions in investment over the next 25–45 years. Achieving net-zero emissions by 2070 requires \$10–12.5 trillion, while climate adaptation needs add \$100 billion annually by 2030.
2. **Banking-Centric Discussions:** India's capital mobilisation for climate action is mostly bank-focused. However, this approach neglects other key players like pension funds that can provide long-term capital.
3. **Pension Funds' Untapped Potential:** India's pension funds manage \$600 billion, growing 10% annually. Although over half is in government securities, the rest goes into equities, bonds, and other financial assets — yet little flows to climate-focused investments.

Why Pension Funds Suit Climate Investment

1. **Long-Term Investment Horizon:** Pensioners invest over decades, aligning well with the long gestation of renewable energy, clean transport, and climate adaptation projects. These sectors promise better returns than carbon-heavy ones in a decarbonising economy.

2. Stable and Patient Capital: Unlike typical market investors reacting to short-term news, pension funds adopt disciplined, patient strategies. This makes them ideal to support climate tech requiring sustained capital over long periods.

3. Compatibility with Green Technologies: Clean investments can outperform fossil-based ones in the coming decades. Pension funds' patient capital can help scale such technologies during India's economic transition.

Risk Alignment and Future Resilience

1. Climate as a Systemic Risk: Long-term risks like climate change threaten company performance and financial stability. Pension funds, due to their long-duration liabilities, must factor these into portfolio decisions.

2. Shift from Government to Corporate Assets: As India's financial markets evolve, pension funds will diversify more into corporate assets. Integrating climate risk into asset selection will ensure : sustained performance and reduced exposure to future shocks.

3. Global Practices as a Guide: European pension funds already integrate climate risk to safeguard beneficiaries. Indian funds must follow suit to protect long-term returns.

Regulatory Gaps in Climate Governance

1. Weak Climate Disclosures: Globally, regulators demand climate-related disclosures from pension funds. However, Indian pension regulators offer minimal guidance, limiting climate risk management and transparency.

2. Structural Challenges in India: EPFO and NPS manage most pension assets. NPS employs external fund managers, but lacks strong enforcement of its stewardship code, leaving climate considerations largely optional.

3. Lack of Beneficiary Awareness: Investors are often unaware whether climate risks are factored into fund decisions. This weakens accountability and delays green capital mobilisation.

Moving Towards Global Best Practices

1. Role of International Norms: NPS, as an IOSCO member, is aligned with global frameworks promoting climate disclosures. These can improve transparency and support better risk assessments of carbon-intensive investments.

2. Initiating Regulatory Dialogue: Like the Reserve Bank's move on sustainable finance, NPS can begin consultations on climate risk. This would build awareness and push fund managers towards responsible investment aligned with India's green goals.

Question for practice:

Examine how pension funds can contribute to India's green economy transition while managing climate-related financial risks.

RBI committee keeps rates steady amid uncertainty

Source: The post RBI committee keeps rates steady amid uncertainty has been created, based on the article "**RBI has done well to focus on its core competence: Price stability**" published in "**Live mint**" on 7th August 2025

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

Context: On August 6, 2025, the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) chose to keep the repo rate unchanged at 5.5% amid global uncertainties. Despite earlier aggressive rate cuts, the MPC signaled a pause, acknowledging the limits of monetary policy in managing growth during tariff-driven instability.

A Shift Toward Caution

- 1. Maintaining Neutrality Amid Global Instability:** The MPC unanimously chose a status quo on interest rates, aligning with other major central banks. The stance reflects caution in the face of trade uncertainties, especially those triggered by tariff tensions.
- 2. Recognising the Limits of Monetary Action:** Governor Sanjay Malhotra admitted the unpredictable impact of tariffs. The MPC acknowledged it had limited space left to support growth after successive rate cuts earlier this year.
- 3. Restraint as a Strategic Choice:** Like leaving a ball in Test cricket, the MPC's restraint was portrayed as intelligent policy. Despite reducing inflation projections, it did not pursue further cuts, avoiding premature policy moves.

Reconsidering Past Rate Cuts

- 1. Bias Toward Growth Now Tempered:** The MPC had earlier shown a bias for supporting growth, reducing the repo rate thrice in 2025. The June cut of 50 bps and a 100 bps CRR reduction bordered on adventurism.
- 2. Concerns Over Policy Overreach:** Aggressive cuts may have weakened household financial savings, while credit growth stayed subdued. The rise in corporate credit did not translate into bank credit growth, raising doubts about monetary policy's effectiveness.
- 3. Credit Dynamics and Structural Constraints:** If weak credit demand is structural, not cyclical, monetary policy tools may be ineffective. Easy money might instead be diverted to riskier retail lending, endangering financial stability.

Limitations of Inflation Data

- 1. Misleading Comfort in Low Inflation:** Retail inflation hit a 77-month low of 2.1% in June, but this was due to high base effects and low food inflation. The June resolution ignored this distortion.
- 2. Correcting Past Oversights:** The August resolution explicitly acknowledged base effects and predicted CPI inflation could exceed 4% by Q4 2025-26. Core inflation also showed a rising trend, averaging 4.3% in Q1.

Wider Economic Headwinds

- 1. Rupee Depreciation and Import Price Pressures:** With the rupee falling to a record ₹87.8 per dollar, and tensions with the US over Russian oil and arms, import inflation is expected to rise, affecting domestic prices.
- 2. Relying on Fiscal Policy for Growth:** Even if growth slows, the remedy lies with fiscal policy, not monetary interventions. The MPC reaffirmed that central banks should focus on potential growth, guided by data.

Conclusion

The RBI's MPC has now returned to a path of cautious decision-making. In uncertain times, restraint and data dependence have prevailed over adventurism, preserving monetary credibility while allowing space for fiscal policy to act.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the reasons behind the RBI Monetary Policy Committee's decision to maintain a status quo on interest rates in August 2025.

ICJ ruling reinforces global climate action obligations

Source: The post ICJ ruling reinforces global climate action obligations has been created, based on the article “World court’s advisory opinion boosts climate action” published in “The Hindu” on 8th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment

Context: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has issued a landmark advisory opinion clarifying states’ legal obligations on climate change. While not binding, such opinions shape global norms and can generate political pressure, marking a significant step in advancing climate accountability and strengthening climate justice.

For detailed information on **International Court declares climate action a legal global obligation** [read this article here](#)

Legal Obligations on Climate Protection

- 1. Authoritative Clarification of Duties:** The ICJ unanimously affirmed that states are legally bound to protect the climate system. This includes clear consequences for non-compliance, reinforcing that climate obligations transcend political considerations.
- 2. Integration of Treaty Commitments:** The court interpreted climate treaties—the UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, and Paris Agreement—alongside scientific consensus, ensuring a unified approach to their provisions. This strengthens operational clarity for states’ responsibilities.
- 3. 1.5°C as a Binding Threshold:** Drawing on science and COP decisions, the court held that limiting warming to 1.5°C is the relevant goal, narrowing ambiguity in treaty language.

Nationally Determined Contributions and State Responsibility

- 1. No Unfettered Discretion:** Rejecting claims of absolute freedom in designing NDCs, the court ruled that states must exercise due diligence and cooperation in setting climate goals.
- 2. Highest Possible Ambition Standard:** NDCs must reflect the highest possible ambition, with proactive measures reasonably capable of achieving them.
- 3. Binding Nature of Implementation:** Though often viewed as voluntary, NDC commitments now carry legal weight through states’ obligations to act in good faith.

Climate Justice and Global North-South Dynamics

- 1. Applying CBDR-RC Principle:** The court reaffirmed that responsibilities vary according to historical emissions, development level, and current capacities.
- 2. Obligation of Support from Developed Nations:** Wealthy countries must provide finance and technology transfer for mitigation and adaptation in developing nations. This duty is legally binding despite no specific figure in the Paris Agreement.
- 3. Accountability in Assistance:** Breach of support obligations is judged against good faith and due diligence, linking finance directly to global temperature targets.

Broader International Legal Framework

1. **Rejection of Self-Contained Regime Argument:** Contrary to some states' claims, climate treaties do not operate in isolation. General international and environmental law principles also apply.
2. **Obligations Beyond Treaties:** Duties to mitigate, prevent harm, and cooperate arise from other environmental treaties, the Law of the Sea, and customary law.
3. **Human Rights Considerations:** Climate actions must protect human rights, ensuring a just transition without harming vulnerable groups.

Attribution and Accountability

1. **Scientific Basis for Responsibility:** The court noted it is scientifically possible to determine each state's total emissions contribution, past and present.
2. **No Escape through Withdrawal:** Leaving a climate treaty does not remove obligations; commitments persist under general international law.

Strategic Leverage for the Global South

1. **Small Island States' Legal Win:** Island nations initiated the request for the opinion, securing a powerful tool to hold major emitters accountable.
2. **Boost to Climate Litigation:** The opinion strengthens court challenges to insufficient climate action, such as the *Ridhima Pandey* case in India.
3. **Collective Pressure for Fair Commitments:** Global South countries can use this decision to demand better fulfilment of climate finance promises and resist disproportionate burdens.

Question for practice:

Examine how the ICJ advisory opinion strengthens global climate accountability.

India's Goldilocks Economy Faces Hidden Structural Challenges

Source: The post *India's Goldilocks Economy Faces Hidden Structural Challenges* has been created, based on the article "*Is the Indian economy perfectly balanced?*" published in "*The Hindu*" on 8th August 2025

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

Context: India's Finance Ministry recently described the economy as being in a "**Goldilocks situation**", marked by moderate growth, low inflation, and supportive monetary conditions. While quarterly numbers point to buoyancy, a closer look at **inflation trends, wage stagnation, inequality, and fiscal constraints** shows structural weaknesses behind this optimistic view.

The Goldilocks Claim and Surface Indicators

1. **Official and Analyst Optimism:** The government pointed to **7.6% GDP growth**, peaking interest rates, and stable corporate earnings as signs of a balanced economy. Analysts labelled it a "**mini-Goldilocks moment**" and projected a strong macroeconomic backdrop for 2025.
2. **Historical Perspective and Skepticism:** Long-term observers caution that such equilibrium may hide **deeper imbalances** that shape the economic reality for most households.

Inflation Trends and Food Price Pressures

1. Divergence Between CPI and Food Inflation: CPI fell from **4.8% in May 2024 to 2.82% in May 2025**, but the **Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI)** often stayed higher. In **October 2024**, CFPI reached **10.87%** against CPI's 6.21%. In **August 2024**, it was 5.66% against 3.65% CPI.

2. Impact on Lower-Income Groups: Food is nearly **half of household spending** for low-income families. High and volatile food prices—due to unseasonal rains, supply disruptions, and global price changes—reduce purchasing power and force cuts in diet, savings, and essential needs.

3. Core Inflation as a Better Gauge: Economists like **Dr. Pronab Sen** argue for focusing on **core inflation** (excluding food and fuel) as it better reflects persistent costs in housing, education, transport, and personal care.

Stagnant Real Wages and the “Silent Squeeze”

1. Gap Between Nominal and Real Wage Growth: In **2023**, nominal wages rose **9.2%**, but real growth was only **2.5%**. In **2020**, real wages fell **-0.4%** despite a 4.4% nominal rise. For **2025**, real growth is projected at **4%** versus an 8.8% nominal hike.

2. Daily Impact on Households: When inflation erodes half the nominal gain, households save less, cut discretionary spending, and depend more on debt—especially in **IT, manufacturing, engineering, and consumer sectors** where hikes are smaller.

Income Inequality and Uneven Recovery

1. ILO Observations and Limited Wage Gains: The **ILO** notes stagnant real wages in emerging economies like India, restricting consumption demand and broad-based recovery.

2. Gini Coefficient Trends and Limitations: The **Gini coefficient** for taxable income dropped from **0.489 (AY13)** to a projected **0.402 (AY23)**, but it misses most of the **informal sector**, hiding real inequality.

3. K-Shaped Recovery and Wealth Concentration: Post-pandemic growth favoured the affluent, with **billionaires increasing** while lower incomes stagnated. This risks **social cohesion** and limits access to quality health and education.

Fiscal Deficit and Debt Constraints

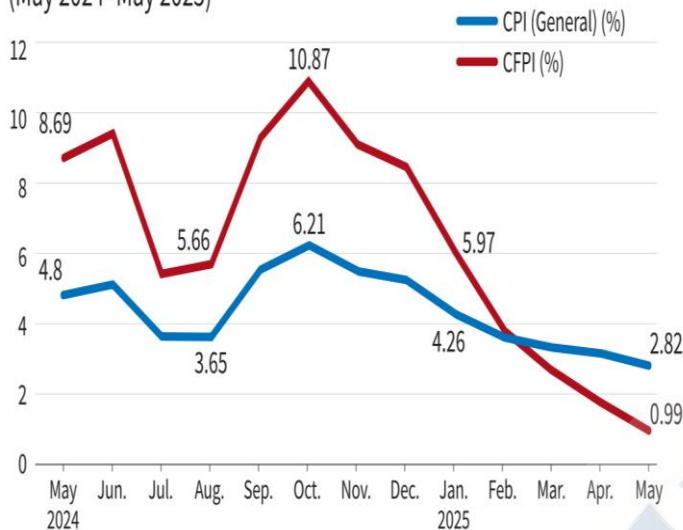
1. Fiscal Consolidation Goals: The fiscal deficit is projected to fall from **6.4% (2022-23)** to **4.4% (2025-26)**, and the revenue deficit from 4% to 1.5%. The primary deficit may drop from 3% to 0.8%.

2. Risks of High Public Debt: Public debt was **81% of GDP in 2022-23**, far above the 60% FRBM target,

India's Goldilocks moment

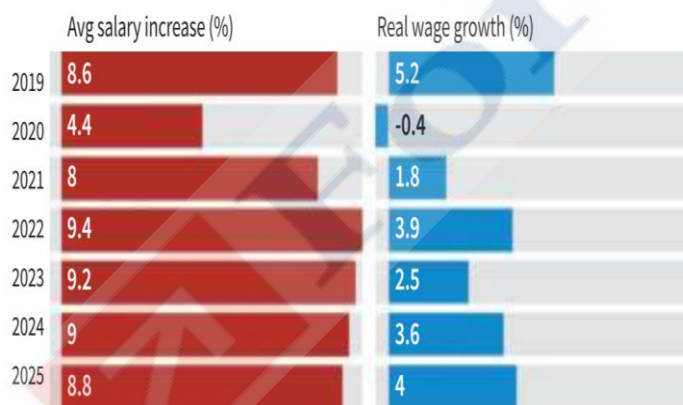
While the number of billionaires in India has surged, real wages for many at the lower end of the income spectrum have remained the same. This persistent inequality can undermine social cohesion

Chart 1: All-India inflation rates: CPI (General) and CFPI
(May 2024- May 2025)



Source: MoSPI

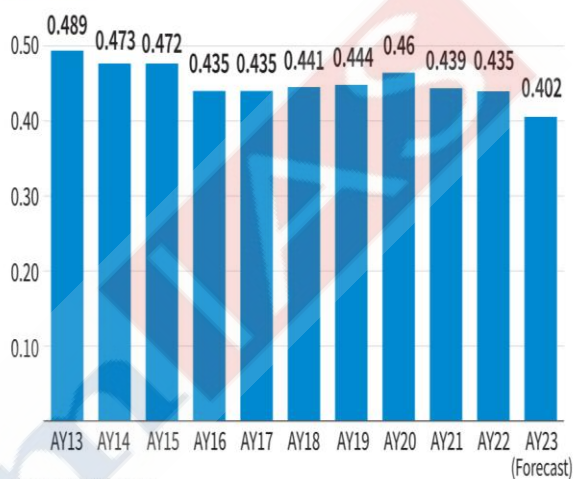
Chart 2: Salary increase vs real wage growth (2019-2025)



Sectors handing out lower hikes: IT product and services, manufacturing, engineering and consumer industries

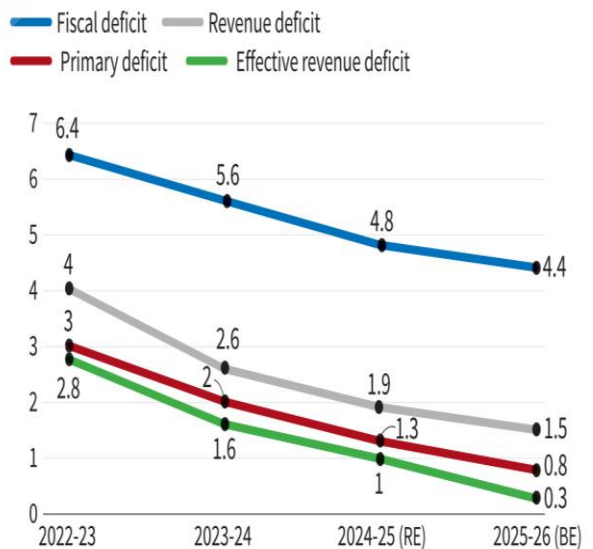
Source: 2025 projection is on the basis of MNC data collected by Deloitte in December 2024 for salary increases

Chart 3: Gini coefficient on taxable income (AY13-AY23F)



Source: PIB Chennai

Chart 4: Trends in fiscal and revenue deficits (% of GDP)



Source: Union Budget, PIB

reducing fiscal space and risking higher taxes or lower social spending.

3. Crowding Out Private Investment: High borrowing needs can raise interest rates, discouraging private investment and slowing job creation.

Beyond the Goldilocks Narrative

1. Underlying Fragilities: Volatile food inflation, wage stagnation, inequality, and fiscal stress reveal weaknesses beneath the surface optimism.

2. Need for Inclusive Growth: India's economic strength depends on **raising real incomes**, ensuring **equitable growth**, and building **fiscal resilience**.

3. Risk of Superficial Optimism: Without addressing structural challenges, the **"just right" economy** remains out of reach for many households.

Question for practice:

Examine how structural challenges in inflation, wages, inequality, and fiscal health undermine the perception of India's current "Goldilocks" economic situation.

MGNREGA remains crucial for rural economic revival

Source: The post MGNREGA remains crucial for rural economic revival has been created, based on the article **"India's rural jobs scheme is more relevant today than it may seem"** published in **"Live Mint"** on 8th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- growth, development and employment.

Context: August 2025 marks 20 years of MGNREGA, India's largest rural employment programme after the National Food Security Act. Enacted under UPA-I, it created a legal and rights-based framework for social protection. Despite changes, it remains central to rural livelihoods, especially for marginalized communities. For detailed information on **Rural economy shows growth but signals are still mixed** [read this article here](#)

Origins and Unique Features

1. Legal Backing and Rights-Based Framework: MGNREGA was passed by Parliament, giving it legal status and immunity from arbitrary government changes. It established a statutory right to work for rural households.

2. Universal Applicability and Self-Selection: Its universal rural coverage and self-selection principle reduced targeting errors common in earlier schemes. The poor, particularly marginalized groups, could opt in without complex eligibility filters.

3. Direct and Indirect Gains: Beyond employment and poverty reduction, MGNREGA boosted rural infrastructure, agricultural productivity, and wage growth, producing long-term economic benefits.

Impact on Rural Labour and Social Inclusion

1. Participation of Marginalized Groups: Women form over half of MGNREGA's workforce. SC and ST workers consistently make up about a quarter, exceeding their population share.

2. Empowerment through Self-Selection: Marginalized communities continue to self-select into the programme, ensuring inclusion without the need for targeted quotas.

3. Indirect Market Impact: From 2008 to 2013, MGNREGA helped push rural wages up by more than 6% annually in real terms, lifting incomes and stimulating rural demand.

Infrastructure and Productivity Gains

1. Agricultural Enhancement: Village irrigation projects, rural roads, and soil conservation works have improved farm productivity. Many projects were on land owned by marginalized farmers, directly aiding the poorest.

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2. Rural Connectivity: Road construction under MGNREGA improved access to markets, boosting trade and agricultural sales.

Challenges and Decline in Effectiveness

1. Falling Wage Competitiveness: Post-2011–12, wages fell below market levels in most states, with 2023 data showing gaps in 20 states.

2. Administrative and Political Hurdles: Since 2014, biometric authentication, delayed payments, and other conditions have slowed implementation. West Bengal saw a two-year suspension due to Centre–state disputes.

3. Stagnating Rural Wages: Administrative apathy has contributed to wage stagnation since 2013, dampening rural demand.

Reviving the Scheme for Economic Growth

1. Crisis-Response Potential: MGNREGA cushioned rural distress during the 2008 financial crisis and the covid pandemic, when demand for work surged.

2. Current Economic Need: With rural wages and farm incomes stagnant, MGNREGA can revive consumption and productivity, bolstering domestic demand amid global uncertainty.

3. Policy Actions Needed: The scheme needs higher budget allocation, wage hikes, and removal of administrative barriers to align with its objectives.

Conclusion

MGNREGA remains vital for rural India's economic stability. Strengthening it is not only socially just but also essential for boosting rural demand and national growth.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the role of MGNREGA in addressing rural economic distress over the past two decades.

India must respond to American tariff hike with strategy

Source: The post India must respond to American tariff hike with strategy has been created, based on the article “Stay calm, negotiate smartly” published in “Indian Express” on 8th August 2025

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

Context: On August 6, President Donald Trump doubled tariffs on all Indian products entering the US from 25% to 50%, affecting nearly a fifth of India's \$87 billion exports. The decision, rooted in political and strategic motives, requires a calm, well-planned Indian response to protect economic and strategic interests.

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

Understanding the Tariff Escalation

1. Shift from Strategic Altruism: The US has ended special trade carve-outs for India, once justified by the hope of a long-term partnership. This signals a move towards a transactional approach.

2. Political and Personal Factors: Trump is reportedly offended that India did not acknowledge the US's possible role in the May 10 India-Pakistan ceasefire.

3. Economic and Technological Disputes: US tech firms resent **India's data localisation rules**, as India controls data of **one-fifth of humanity**, vital for modern AI.

4. Energy and Geopolitics: India's **discounted Russian oil purchases** are politically inconvenient for Washington, prompting punitive tariffs.

Short-Term Tactical Responses

1. Targeted Exemptions: India should seek exemptions for **textiles, jewellery, and electronics**, joining the over **\$1 trillion worth of US tariff exemptions** already granted. Pharmaceuticals and smartphones are exempt for now.

2. Mobilising US Domestic Pressure: Engage US retailers and industries to show **how tariffs raise inflation** and **hurt American consumers**, especially before major shopping seasons.

3. Retaliation with Restraint: Prepare a list of **politically sensitive US exports** — California almonds, Washington apples, Wisconsin motorcycles — and apply duties only if talks fail.

Negotiating Leverage

1. Trade Concessions with Strategic Value: Offer tariff cuts on **luxury goods and automobiles** in return for benefits like increased US natural gas sales and **controlled fintech access**.

2. Separating Trade from Security: Maintain strategic deterrence in the **Indo-Pacific** while using big-ticket defence deals — drones, GE-HAL fighter engines — as incentives for tariff removal.

3. Domestic Support Measures: Provide **temporary credit** and **incentives** to vulnerable export sectors such as garments and pharmaceuticals.

Long-Term Strategic Adjustments

1. Coalition Building: Collaborate with countries also facing US tariffs — **Vietnam, Bangladesh, Brazil, EU, Japan**, and even China — to form coordinated responses.

2. Workarounds and Diversification: Use **Mexico and Canada** as transit points to bypass tariffs. Accelerate the **EU trade agreement**, implement the UK deal, and strengthen Gulf and Latin American ties.

3. Leveraging Services Sector Strength: Expand IT and business services exports, especially **Global Capability Centres**, which are largely immune to tariff measures.

Transforming the Challenge into Opportunity

1. Reducing Own Trade Barriers: Selectively **lower India's high tariffs** to make exports more competitive.

2. Accelerating Manufacturing Reforms: Push long-delayed reforms to improve competitiveness and productivity.

3. Resilience over Dependence: Reduce over-reliance on the US market, using **domestic demand, diaspora networks, and global partnerships** to sustain growth.

Conclusion: Calm, Pragmatic Statecraft

India must **negotiate firmly, build alliances, diversify markets, and boost competitiveness**. Following Deng Xiaoping's advice — **"hide your strength, bide your time"** — this tariff dispute can become a turning point for a **resilient, confident Indian trade strategy**. The US market matters, but India's growth rests on **dignity, sovereignty, and strategic autonomy**.

Question for practice:

Examine how India can strategically respond to the recent US tariff hike while safeguarding its economic and strategic interests.

India faces economic challenges from new United States tariffs

Source: The post India faces economic challenges from new United States tariffs has been created, based on the article **"With tariffs, India's growth rate needs a careful watch"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 9th August 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

Context: The United States has imposed **two major trade measures** against India: a **25% reciprocal tariff** on exports from August 7 and an **additional 25% penal levy** from August 29 for continuing crude oil imports from Russia. Together, these could **reduce India's exports, weaken growth, and widen the current account deficit (CAD)**.

For detailed information on **India must respond to American tariff hike with strategy** [read this article here](#)

India-U.S. Trade Context and Policy Actions

- 1. India's Trade Surplus with the U.S.:** India had a **\$41.18 billion** merchandise trade surplus with the U.S. in 2024–25, which is **rising steadily**. The U.S. seeks to narrow this gap by targeting India's **exports and imports**.
- 2. Impact on Crude Imports:** The penal levy also acts as a **non-tariff barrier** on Russian crude, pushing India towards costlier imports from the U.S. or other suppliers, **raising import costs**.
- 3. Free Trade Concerns:** Such unilateral actions are **against free and fair trade principles**, showing the use of trade measures as **policy enforcement tools**.

Impact of Reciprocal Tariffs

- 1. Effect on Exports and Trade Balance:** Assuming **import elasticity of -1**, India's exports to the U.S. may **fall by 25%**. For 2024–25, this could **widen the trade deficit by 0.56% of GDP to 7.84%**.
- 2. Effect on GDP Growth:** Real GDP growth could fall from **6.5% to 5.9%**. The **CAD may rise from 0.6% to 1.15%**.
- 3. Impact in 2025–26:** Since four months are already over, GDP decline may be about **0.4%** and CAD rise proportionately less.

Caveats and Mitigating Factors

- 1. Ongoing Trade Agreements:** A trade deal with the **UK** and talks with the **EU** may **improve the CAD**, though the impact is unquantified.
- 2. Tariffs on Other Exporters:** U.S. tariffs on other countries could **reduce competition** for Indian exports.
- 3. Exchange Rate Depreciation:** The **rupee fell to over ₹87.5** per U.S. dollar after tariff announcements, possibly offsetting some export losses.

4. Residual Impact: Even with these positives, **GDP growth may still be 0.5% lower** than the base 6.5% forecast, and CAD could widen similarly.

Strategic Policy Responses

1. Negotiation Leverage: India can use ongoing trade talks to **negotiate with the U.S.**, without compromising on sensitive areas like **agriculture** and **MSMEs**.

2. Diversifying Exports: Expanding into **new markets** is essential but **difficult in the short term**.

3. Lowering Import Tariffs: High **import tariffs raise input costs** for exporters. Cutting them could improve **export competitiveness**.

Impact of Penal Levy

1. Economic Impact: The penal levy's effects are similar to reciprocal tariffs but **slightly reduced** due to some **commodity exemptions**. Combined, they could **reduce GDP growth by over 0.6 percentage points** in 2025–26.

2. Diplomatic Efforts: India should **highlight the discriminatory nature** of the levy, noting other countries import more from Russia. The **three-week negotiation window** should be used effectively.

3. Long-Term Risks: Tariffs as policy tools undermine the **multilateral trade system**. India should **work with global partners** to restore balanced trade rules.

Question for practice:

Examine the economic implications of recent U.S. trade measures on India's growth and current account deficit.

India's Industrial Accidents Show Neglect of Worker Safety

Source: The post India's Industrial Accidents Show Neglect of Worker Safety has been created, based on the article "**Industrial accidents, the human cost of indifference**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 9th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Disaster management

Context: Industrial accidents in India continue to claim thousands of lives every year, with recent disasters in Telangana and Tamil Nadu exposing systemic neglect. These tragedies, largely preventable, highlight regulatory gaps, corporate apathy, and a national indifference towards worker safety.

For detailed information on **Issues with safety inspections in industrial areas in India** [read this article here](#)

Scale and Nature of the Crisis

1. Alarming Fatality Rates: Government and RTI data reveal at least **6,500 worker deaths in five years**, averaging nearly three daily fatalities. Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have recorded over 200 major accident deaths in a decade, with unregistered sector fatalities likely much higher.

2. Hidden Toll of Informal Sector: Many small and informal units operate unnoticed, with deaths often unreported. Behind each statistic lies human suffering—families devastated, breadwinners lost, and communities pushed into hardship.

3. Frequent Chemical Accidents: A **2022 CSE study** found over 130 major chemical accidents between 2020–22, killing 218 and injuring over 300, mostly in small and medium enterprises operating below regulatory scrutiny.

Common Causes and Negligence

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1. **Lack of Basic Fire Safety:** Many factories lack **No-Objection Certificates**, firefighting systems, alarms, or functional extinguishers. Safety measures are often absent or ignored.
2. **Unsafe Work Practices:** High-risk jobs proceed without permit-to-work systems, hazard identification, or job safety analysis. Migrant and contract workers, often unaware of safety signage, are left untrained.
3. **Blocked Exits and Poor Infrastructure:** Fire exits are locked, blocked, or hidden under storage materials, turning accidents into mass-casualty events.
4. **Weak Enforcement:** Audits often become box-ticking exercises. Convictions for lapses are rare and penalties negligible, allowing unsafe practices to persist.

Failure to Prioritise Safety

1. **Corporate Attitudes:** Even large firms prioritise operational efficiency over safety culture. Unlike Germany or Japan, India treats safety as a compliance burden rather than a value.
2. **State-Level Trends:** Gujarat reported over 60 major industrial fires and gas leaks in 2021 alone. DGFASLI data shows a serious industrial accident in registered factories every two days.
3. **Cycle of Inaction:** After each tragedy comes outrage, compensation, and committees—followed by silence. Root causes remain unaddressed, ensuring repetition.

Social and Structural Bias

1. **Disposability of Workers:** Contract and migrant labourers are treated as expendable. Their deaths draw little attention compared to high-profile corporate accidents.
2. **Class Inequality in Safety Response:** Accidents in poorer workplaces receive minimal scrutiny compared to those in elite offices or IT parks, reflecting a troubling class bias.

Need for Systemic Reform

1. **Rejecting 'Act of God' Excuse:** Accidents are not divine acts but man-made failures. Countries like **South Korea and Singapore** have corporate manslaughter laws holding executives criminally accountable—India needs similar measures.
2. **Call for Action:** Reforms must include stronger labour safety boards, digitised risk reporting, and whistleblower protection. Safety should be recognised as a **right, not a privilege**.
3. **The Central Question:** India has the means to prevent such tragedies. What remains in doubt is whether there is enough public, corporate, and political will to act.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors responsible for recurring industrial accidents in India.

Lowering age of consent may harm vulnerable minor girls

Source: The post Lowering age of consent may harm vulnerable minor girls has been created, based on the article “The faultlines of consent” published in “**Indian Express**” on 9th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Vulnerable sections of population

Context: The Supreme Court is hearing *the Nipun Saxena and Anr vs Union of India PIL* to decide whether the **age of consent under the POCSO Act, 2012 should be lowered from 18**. The debate raises concerns about vulnerable minors, exploitation, and the realities of adolescent relationships in India. For detailed information on **Age of consent** [read this article here](#)

Legal Framework and Current Debate

1. **POCSO Act Provisions:** Under the POCSO Act, any sexual activity with a person under 18 is a crime. The law treats all such cases as abuse, irrespective of perceived consent.
2. **Supreme Court Review:** A Bench led by Justices Vikram Nath, Sanjay Karol, and Sandeep Mehta will examine whether the age of consent should be reduced. The review is prompted by recurring disputes in adolescent relationship cases.

Realities Behind “Consensual” Cases

1. **Marginalised Victims:** Many cases involve girls from disadvantaged backgrounds fleeing abusive homes, discrimination, or forced marriage threats. Victims can be as young as 12, often paired with older men.
2. **Cycle of Institutionalisation:** After elopement, police register cases, arrest the man, and place the girl in a shelter until 18. She faces a grim choice between staying confined or returning to an abusive family.
3. **Judicial Leniency and Bias:** Some courts label these situations “Romeo-Juliet love” and acquit or reduce punishment despite significant age gaps, overlooking the coercive conditions behind elopement.

Case Studies and Judicial Responses

1. **Calcutta High Court Controversy:** In one case, a 14-year-old claimed to marry a 25-year-old and wanted to stay with him. The High Court treated it as “non-exploitative,” ignoring her home conditions.
2. **Supreme Court Intervention:** The apex court restored the conviction, citing systemic failure to protect her, but avoided a jail term to prevent further harm.

Data and Trends in Abuse and Child Marriage

1. **Rising POCSO Cases:** NCRB data shows cases rose from 8,541 in 2012 to 53,874 in 2021 due to mandatory reporting. In Mumbai (2021), 54% of victims’ partners were romantically linked or had promised marriage.
2. **Child Marriage Drivers:** India saw 1.6 million child marriages in 2022 but only 900 registered cases. Poverty, lack of education, and fear of violence, not tradition, now drive early marriages.

Challenges in Defining Consent

1. **Complexity of Consent:** Consent can be genuine, reluctant, manipulated, or withdrawn. Minors often cannot grasp its legal or emotional implications, and judicial interpretations vary.
2. **Defence in Trials:** “Consent” is frequently cited in rape cases, making its assessment crucial yet inconsistent.

Policy Considerations and Risks

1. **Advocacy for Lowering Age:** Some activists suggest reducing the age to 16, excluding coercion and authority-based relationships, to protect girls’ autonomy.

2. **Counterarguments:** Critics question why not lower it further if autonomy is the basis, and stress that without nuanced safeguards, vulnerable girls may face greater harm.

3. **Implementation Gaps:** Justice Abhay S. Oka emphasised the need for informed choice, proper care, and protection, warning that blanket legal changes could worsen invisibility and exploitation.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the implications of lowering the age of consent under the POCSO Act on the protection and autonomy of minor girls in India.

Rising flash flood risks threaten fragile Himalayan regions

Source: The post Rising flash flood risks threaten fragile Himalayan regions has been created, based on the article “Rain, landslides, flash floods: an uncertain mix” published in “**Indian Express**” on 9th August 2025

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

Context: The **August 5 flash flood** in **Dharali village**, Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand, killed **at least four people** and left many missing. The disaster, with **widespread destruction** and hundreds homeless, has renewed concern about **extreme weather threats** in India’s hill states and the **growing unpredictability** of such events.

Impact and Immediate Circumstances

1. **Human and Material Loss:** The flood swept away homes, damaged infrastructure, and stranded people. **Four deaths** have been confirmed, and several remain missing. **Hundreds** are left without shelter.

2. **Wider Regional Pattern:** In the last month, **Himachal Pradesh** saw similar disasters, with **dozens killed** and **thousands affected**, showing a rising trend of extreme weather in hill states.

Possible Triggers of the Dharali Flood

1. **Rainfall Data:** On August 5, **Uttarkashi** received **32 mm of rain** — double the normal for that day but not extreme. In the preceding days, rainfall there was **less than in other districts** like Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar.

2. **Glacial Lake Breach Hypothesis:** A senior glaciologist suggested a possible **breach in an upstream glacial lake**. **Ice-breaks** can trigger floods, as seen elsewhere, but this remains **unconfirmed**.

3. **No Cloudburst Evidence:** The **India Meteorological Department** defines a cloudburst as **100 mm rain in about an hour** over a 10 km x 10 km area. There was **no record** or indication of such an event in Uttarkashi.

Understanding Flash Flood Causes

1. **Multiple Contributing Factors:** Flash floods usually result from **heavy rain, landslides or mudslides**, and steep slopes causing run-offs into rivers. Not all intense rains or landslides cause floods, and debris may not always reach a river.

2. **Role of Glacial Breaks:** In **Chamoli (2021)**, **3–4 million cubic metres of water** were suddenly released after a glacier collapse. A similar event in Uttarkashi is under investigation.

3. Fragile Geological Conditions: The **young Himalayan mountains**, with unconsolidated rocks and weak formations, are **highly prone** to landslides and floods. **Saturated soils** and erosion can make even low-intensity rain dangerous.

Special Vulnerabilities of the Himalayas

- 1. Geological Youth:** Compared to the **older Aravalis**, the Himalayas are less stable and more disaster-prone.
- 2. Seismic Risks:** Frequent **earthquakes** increase instability, making rainfall impacts worse.
- 3. Human-Induced Stress:** **Large-scale construction, riverbank activity, and heavy traffic** worsen ecological fragility.

Challenges in Prediction and Mitigation

- 1. Limits of Forecasting:** Heavy rain and landslides can be predicted, but it is **difficult to forecast** if they will cause a flash flood. Dharali showed even **moderate rainfall** can cause devastation.
- 2. Need for Preventive Action:** Measures include **avoiding construction near rivers, relocating villages, and safe disposal of boulders and debris** to prevent river blockages.
- 3. Importance of Preparedness:** Unpredictability demands **robust planning, early warning improvements, and strict land-use controls** to lower risks.

Question for practice:

Discuss the factors contributing to flash flood risks in the Himalayas.

India's struggle to balance ties with major global powers

Source: The post India's struggle to balance ties with major global powers has been created, based on the article "**US-Russia-China dynamics are a nightmare for India**" published in "**Live Mint**" on 11th August 2025

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

Context: India's security environment depends heavily on the state of US–Russia–China relations. With a direct threat from China, India seeks strong ties with both the US and Russia, but shifting great-power dynamics have often complicated this goal.

India's Ideal Geopolitical Scenario

- 1. Balanced Relations with Great Powers:** India would benefit most if it maintained strong ties with both the US and Russia, while the two also shared amicable relations. This would allow defence partnerships with both without mutual suspicion.
- 2. Strategic Autonomy Goal:** Such a balance would ensure India's independence in security decisions and access to advanced defence technology from both sides. However, India cannot influence US–Russia ties directly.

Cold War Choices and Lessons

- 1. Alignment with the Soviet Union:** During the Cold War, India leaned towards the Soviet Union, despite wishing to avoid alignment. This was due to geopolitical and strategic considerations.

2. **Mixed Outcomes:** In 1962, the Soviet Union remained neutral in the India–China war to preserve ties with Beijing, disappointing New Delhi. In 1971, amid the Sino-Soviet split, Moscow signed a quasi-military alliance with India, deterring China.

3. **Key Insight:** India learned that a great-power partner fully committed to balancing China was crucial for security.

Post-Cold War Shifts and New Threats

1. **Changing Global Order:** After 1991, the US emerged as the sole great power. By the early 2000s, China's rise as a military, economic, and technological giant became India's primary threat. Russia, weakened, grew reliant on Beijing.

2. **India's Strengths and Gaps:** India's growing economy and nuclear arsenal improved its security position. However, the widening power gap with China meant India still needed a strong partner to deter Chinese aggression.

India-US Strategic Partnership

1. **Shared Concerns over China:** As China became America's main competitor, India and the US found common ground in countering its influence, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

2. **Divergence on Russia:** India valued Russia for critical defence assets, such as leasing nuclear-powered submarines, while the US viewed Russia mainly as an adversary.

Ukraine War and Strategic Disruption

1. **Hopes for Indo-Pacific Focus:** India expected the US to shift military resources from Europe to the Indo-Pacific, enabling a favourable strategic setting for India's security and defence cooperation with both powers.

2. **Shift Back to Confronting Russia:** Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine derailed this possibility. While US documents still mention China, its strategy has pivoted to targeting Russia.

3. **Trump's Return and India's Dilemma:** Initial hopes that Donald Trump would reorient US policy faded. By August 2025, he was punishing India for its Russia ties, leaving India with a hostile China, a weakened Russia, and an antagonistic US stance—a scenario far from ideal.

Question for practice:

Examine how shifts in US–Russia–China relations have shaped India's strategic options since the Cold War.

Char Dham pilgrimage growth fuels disasters in fragile Uttarakhand

Source: The post Char Dham pilgrimage growth fuels disasters in fragile Uttarakhand has been created, based on the article “India may need to take a hard decision on pilgrimage spots” published in “Live Mint” on 11th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Disaster management

Context: The Char Dham Yatra, one of India's largest annual pilgrimages, attracts massive crowds but faces growing threats from flash floods, landslides, and environmental degradation. A warming climate and unchecked development in Uttarakhand's fragile Himalayan terrain have intensified disaster risks, prompting urgent concerns over safety and sustainability.

For detailed information on **NGT panel on key pilgrimage sites in Uttarakhand's Char Dham trail** [read this article here](#)

Growing Popularity and Sacred Importance

1. **Rapid Rise in Pilgrimage Scale:** The Char Dham Yatra connects four sacred Hindu shrines in the Himalayas. Once remote, it now draws more visitors than global icons like the Statue of Liberty, boosted by road and rail access.
2. **Religious and Geographical Significance:** The shrines are tied to tributaries of the Ganga river, originating from glaciers in Gangotri. These glaciers have reportedly shrunk by about 40% since preindustrial times.
3. **Political and Economic Drivers:** Post-1962 Sino-Indian War, infrastructure was built to improve border access. State patronage, including frequent visits by Prime Minister Modi and a \$9.8 billion connectivity plan, has further boosted tourism.

Increasing Frequency of Disasters

1. **Recurring Catastrophic Events:** Disasters have repeatedly struck the pilgrimage route—over 6,000 died in Kedarnath floods (2013), and over 200 died near Badrinath (2021). Cloudbursts and landslides continue to cause deaths and destruction.
2. **High Disaster Burden:** Despite having less than 1% of India's population, Uttarakhand accounts for about 10% of national disaster relief spending.
3. **Climate Change Impact:** Faster glacier melt and heavier rainfall due to a warming climate contribute to flash floods and landslides.

Role of Unchecked Development

1. **Infrastructure Expansion Risks:** Roads, railways, hotels, and shops lead to deforestation and dumping of debris into rivers, accelerating water flow and flood risks.
2. **Deforestation and Soil Destabilization:** Uttarakhand lost 0.8% forest cover in a decade. Poor slope cutting without stabilization makes the land prone to landslides.
3. **Extent of Vulnerability:** Nearly a quarter of the state is classified as high to very high disaster risk, according to recent studies.

Military and Tourism Pressures

1. **Strategic Infrastructure Goals:** Highways are justified for military access to border zones. Budget constraints may lead to compromised engineering, raising disaster risk.
2. **Tourism Revenue Incentives:** Illegal constructions flourish as tourist spending grows, with weak enforcement often linked to corruption.

Possible Solutions and Governance Challenges

1. **Monitoring and Regulation:** Satellite monitoring could curb illegal building if corruption is addressed.
2. **Visitor Limit Policies:** International examples like Machu Picchu and Mount Fuji show that capping visitors can protect fragile sites.
3. **Political Reluctance:** Restricting religious tourism may face political resistance, yet limiting pilgrim numbers could be essential for safety.

Question for practice:

Examine how climate change and unregulated development have combined to increase disaster vulnerability along the Char Dham Yatra route, and suggest measures to ensure both pilgrimage safety and environmental sustainability.

Strengthening diagnostic services to achieve universal health coverage

Source: The post Strengthening diagnostic services to achieve universal health coverage has been created, based on the article “Reaching out to patients” published in “Indian Express” on 11th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health,

Context: Accurate diagnosis is essential for effective treatment. India’s pledge to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) under the National Health Policy 2017 and the UN SDGs highlights the need for affordable, accessible diagnostic services. The article discusses current gaps, technological advances, and policy steps to strengthen public healthcare diagnostics.

For detailed information on **Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in India** [read this article here](#)

Central Role of Diagnosis in Healthcare

1. Basis for Effective Treatment: Diagnosis, built on medical history, clinical examination, and laboratory tests, directs therapy and forecasts disease progression.

Without timely tests, treatment may be delayed or misdirected.

2. Financial and Coverage Implications: Outpatient care forms over 60% of out-of-pocket spending, mostly on drugs, diagnostics, and transport.

Health insurance rarely covers these costs, limiting financial protection.

3. Public Facility Gaps: Absence of local diagnostic services in public centres particularly affects rural areas and urban poor, lowering service coverage.

Bridging the Access Gap

1. Private Sector Reach and Limitations: Private diagnostics offer variety but remain out of reach for large rural and low-income urban populations.

Mobile clinics and point-of-care devices help but cannot replace local public facilities.

2. Need for Close-to-Home Services: UHC objectives demand diagnostics at Ayushman Aarogya Mandirs and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to ensure equitable access.

3. Adapting to Health Transitions: India faces both rising non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes and heart disease and stubborn infectious diseases such as TB and malaria. Diagnostics must respond to both.

Harnessing Technology for Precision and Reach

1. Advances in Diagnostic Tools: Molecular diagnostics, imaging, and tele-diagnostics improve accuracy and bring expert opinion to remote areas.

Semi-auto analysers are now available at PHCs; district hospitals have enhanced imaging.

2. Cost-Effective Use of Tests: Choosing tests requires balancing cost, accuracy, and clinical benefit. Evidence-based diagnostic algorithms should guide sequencing and simultaneous testing decisions.

3. Policy Role of ICMR: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) leads in updating the National List of Essential Diagnostics (NLED) to match epidemiological and technological changes.

Expanding Diagnostic Services Across Levels

1. Strengthening Primary and Sub-Centre Services: New services include HbA1C testing for diabetes, rapid tests for genetic and infectious diseases, and dengue sample collection at sub-centres.

2. Improved TB Detection: Molecular TB testing starts at sub-centres, with in-house facilities at higher centres, addressing high TB burden and late detection.

3. Responding to Climate Change: Expanded mosquito-borne disease testing is vital as transmission seasons and regions widen.

Building Capacity for Sustainable Improvement

1. Training Human Resources: Supplying equipment must be matched with trained lab technicians and skilled frontline workers to conduct and interpret tests.

2. Role of Artificial Intelligence: AI can help interpret results accurately, reducing errors from false positives and negatives.

3. Integrating Technical and Clinical Skills: Care providers must understand statistical measures like sensitivity, specificity, and predictive values to make correct clinical decisions.

Question for practice:

Examine the role of accessible diagnostic services in achieving universal health coverage in India.

India's agricultural exports grow despite global challenges

Source: The post India's agricultural exports grow despite global challenges has been created, based on the article "India's rising farm exports" published in "Indian Express" on 11th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Agriculture

Context: India's overall exports in 2024-25 showed marginal growth, but agricultural exports surged despite potential global trade disruptions, including US tariffs. Strong farm performance contrasts with flat merchandise exports, driven by easing restrictions, favourable weather, and global supply shortages in key commodities.

Overall Export Performance

1. Marginal Growth in Merchandise Exports: India exported goods worth \$437.4 billion in 2024-25, a slight 0.1% rise from the previous year. The April-June 2025 period saw a 1.7% year-on-year increase to \$112 billion.

2. Minister's Confidence Despite Trade Threats: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal expressed optimism for higher exports in 2025-26, even with potential setbacks from US President Trump's proposed 50% tariff on Indian goods.

Agricultural Export Growth

1. Consistent Upward Trend: Agricultural exports rose 6.4% to \$51.9 billion in 2024-25, with April-June 2025 showing 5.8% growth over the previous year. They could reach \$55 billion in 2025-26, surpassing the 2022-23 record of \$53.2 billion.

2. Historical Patterns and Price Influence: From 2003-04 to 2013-14, farm exports jumped from \$7.5 billion to \$43.3 billion, dipped until 2020-21, then peaked at \$53.2 billion in 2022-23, aided by high global agri-commodity prices.

3. Impact of Government Restrictions: The 2023-24 drought and export bans on wheat, rice, sugar, and onions reduced shipments. Improved monsoons in 2024-25 allowed gradual easing of restrictions, especially benefiting commodities like sugar.

Drivers of Current Performance

1. Strong Growth Across Key Commodities: Marine products, non-basmati rice, buffalo meat, coffee, tobacco, and fruits & vegetables posted impressive growth in early 2025-26.

2. Global Supply Shortages: Indian coffee exports rose due to poor harvests in Brazil and Vietnam. Tobacco exports benefited from shortfalls in Brazil and Zimbabwe.

3. Risks from US Tariffs: The US, a major buyer of marine products, coffee, and other goods, plans a 50% tariff from August 27. This could depress prices and reduce Indian export competitiveness, especially if Brazil diverts surplus coffee to global markets.

Agricultural Trade Balance

1. Positive but Shrinking Surplus: In 2024-25, agricultural exports (\$51.9 billion) exceeded imports (\$38.5 billion), yielding a \$13.4 billion surplus, down from \$27.7 billion in 2013-14 due to faster import growth.

2. Concentrated Import Basket: Over two-thirds of imports were vegetable oils, pulses, and fresh fruits. Tree nuts, mainly from the US, formed a significant share.

3. Import Trends in Key Commodities: Pulses imports hit a record 7.3 million tonnes in 2024-25 after duty cuts due to drought but declined this year with better harvests. Vegetable oil imports continue rising, and declining domestic cotton and natural rubber output has increased dependence on imports.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors contributing to the recent surge in India's agricultural exports and assess the potential impact of US tariff measures on this growth.

Supreme Court order weakens protection for domestic violence victims

Source: The post Supreme Court order weakens protection for domestic violence victims has been created, based on the article "A Court ruling with no room for gender justice" published in "The Hindu" on 12th August 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

Context: In *Shivangi Bansal vs Sahib Bansal* (July 2024), the Supreme Court upheld a suspension of arrest or coercive action under Section 498-A IPC for two months after a complaint. This decision, based on questionable premises, risks weakening protections against domestic cruelty and undermines gender equality.

Legislative Background and Purpose of Section 498-A

1. Addressing Domestic Violence: Section 498-A IPC, introduced in 1983, penalises cruelty against a wife by her husband or his relatives with up to three years' imprisonment and a fine. Cruelty includes dowry harassment, driving a woman to suicide, or causing harm to life or health.

2. Socio-Cultural Context: The law was enacted amidst rising dowry deaths and severe domestic violence. Parliament's intent was to cover all forms of cruelty in marriage, complementing other laws like the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.

3. Policy-Maker's Deliberation: The legislation followed detailed parliamentary study, recognising systemic gender inequality and the need for strong legal redress.

Judicial Directions and Supreme Court Endorsement

1. Allahabad High Court's Blanket Protection: The High Court directed that no arrest or coercive action occur for two months after filing a complaint, with cases referred to family welfare committees.

2. Supreme Court's Approval: The Supreme Court endorsed this approach without detailed examination of broader socio-political consequences or fully hearing the State government.

3. Consequences for Complainants: The ruling delays arrests even in severe cases, risks complainant safety, legitimises police inaction in marital cruelty complaints, and discourages reporting.

Limits of Alternative Dispute Resolution in Criminal Offences

1. Appropriate Contexts for Mediation: Conciliation may be suitable for divorce or custody disputes, given their emotional and sensitive nature.

2. Inapplicability in Serious Violence Cases: Where allegations involve violence under penal law, mediation cannot substitute criminal investigation and prosecution.

The 'Misuse' Narrative

1. Judicial Observations on Misuse: Past judgments, including *Preeti Gupta* (2010), *Sushil Kumar Sharma* (2005), and *Arnesh Kumar* (2014), referred to misuse concerns and imposed arrest restrictions.

2. Lack of Empirical Evidence: Despite such claims, no concrete nationwide data proves systemic misuse. Courts deal with individual disputes, which do not justify overriding legislative intent.

3. Conviction Rates Misinterpreted: An 18% conviction rate in 2022 is higher than for several offences. Low rates stem from investigative flaws, social pressures, evidentiary challenges, and the high criminal burden of proof—not necessarily false complaints.

Data and Ground Realities

1. NCRB and NFHS Findings: NCRB recorded 1,34,506 cases under Section 498-A in 2022. NFHS-5 shows significant under-reporting of violence in many States.

2. Rising Cases Reflect Awareness: Reports, like one by Humsafar, attribute increased cases to growing legal awareness among women, not widespread misuse.

3. Potential for Misuse in Any Law: All laws carry misuse risks, but allegations 'veracity should be tested through proper investigation, not pre-emptive suspension.

Implications for Justice and Legal Consistency

1. Undermining Victim Protection: Suspending the law selectively leaves victims more vulnerable and reduces access to timely justice.

2. Impact on Criminal Law Uniformity: Applying stricter tests to specific provisions disrupts the uniform application of criminal law.

3. Contradicting Settled Principles: The Court earlier affirmed that misuse is no ground to invalidate a law (*Sushil Kumar Sharma*, 2005). The current approach undermines this precedent, narrowing the justice window for victims of cruelty.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how the Supreme Court's two-month suspension of arrests under Section 498-A affects victim safety, police investigation, and uniformity of criminal law.

Strengthening community engagement in Indian health governance

Source: The post **Supreme Court order weakens protection for domestic violence victims** has been created, based on the article "Reviving civic engagement in health governance" published in "The Hindu" on 12th August 2025

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

Context: The *Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam* scheme in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka's *Gruha Arogya* scheme aim to deliver healthcare at people's doorsteps, especially for **non-communicable diseases**. While these initiatives expand access, they raise concerns about how far **citizens can engage with and influence health governance** at different levels.

Evolving Nature of Health Governance

1. From Government-led to Multi-actor Systems: Health governance now includes **civil society, professional associations, hospital bodies, and trade unions**. It works through both formal and informal processes, where **power dynamics affect participation**.

2. Importance of Public Engagement: Citizen involvement **affirms dignity, counters epistemic injustice, and strengthens democracy**. It ensures that people influence health decisions affecting them.

3. Benefits for Service Delivery: Engaging communities **improves accountability**, reduces elite dominance, builds trust with providers, and **enhances health outcomes**.

Institutional Mechanisms for Participation

1. National Rural Health Mission Platforms: The **NHM (2005)** created Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs) and Rogi Kalyan Samitis for inclusive participation, especially of **women and marginalised groups**, with **untied funds** for local initiatives.

2. Urban Participation Structures: Urban equivalents include **Mahila Arogya Samitis**, Ward Committees, and NGO-led bodies.

3. Challenges in Implementation: In some areas, **committees are absent**; in others, they face **unclear roles, rare meetings, underused funds, poor coordination, and social hierarchies**.

Barriers to Effective Engagement

1. Perception of Citizens as Passive: Policymakers often see people as **recipients, not co-creators**. Performance is judged by **target numbers**, ignoring ground realities.

2. Language and Framing Issues: Terms like “**beneficiaries**” reduce citizens to **objects of intervention** rather than **rights-holders**.

3. Medicalised and Hierarchical Governance: Leadership is **dominated by doctors** trained in biomedical models. Promotions are often based on **seniority**, not public health expertise, creating a **disconnect from community needs**.

4. Resistance to Participation: Concerns include **extra workload, accountability pressure, dominance by medical or capitalist interests**, and **unequal influence** in governance spaces.

Alternative Avenues for Citizen Voice

1. Non-institutional Channels: Where formal platforms fail, citizens turn to **protests, media campaigns, and legal action**.

2. Unmet Demand for Inclusion: These actions reflect a **strong need for voice and accountability**.

Path to Meaningful Community Engagement

1. Mindset Transformation: Participation should be valued **as much as outcomes**. People must be seen as **partners, not instruments**.

2. Empowering Communities: Spread **health rights awareness**, engage **marginalised groups**, build **civic education early**, and provide **tools for decision-making**.

3. Sensitising Health Actors: Avoid blaming poor awareness for low service use. Address **structural health inequities** with communities.

4. Strengthening Platforms: Existing mechanisms must be **activated, improved, and made inclusive** for lasting change.

Question for practice:

Examine the significance of meaningful community engagement in health governance in India and the challenges that hinder its effective implementation.

Supreme Court to hear CCI and Google Android case

Source: The post **Supreme Court to hear CCI and Google Android case** has been created, based on the article “**What will be the impact of Google antitrust case?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 12th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance- consumer rights in India.

Context: On August 8, the Supreme Court admitted appeals from Google, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), and the Alliance Digital India Foundation (ADIF). The case is about Google's alleged abuse of dominance in the Android market. The hearings in November will decide rules for fair competition, consumer rights, and platform control in India.

CCI's Findings Against Google

1. Start of the Probe: In 2020, complaints from app developers and industry bodies triggered the CCI investigation. They said Google used its strong position in Android to promote its own services and limit rivals.

2. Mandatory Google Play Billing System: Google required all in-app purchases on the Play Store to use the Google Play Billing System (GPBS). This meant developers had to pay commissions between 15% and 30%. They could not use their own payment systems. Google's own app, YouTube, was exempt. The CCI said this gave YouTube an unfair cost advantage.

3. Pre-Installation of Google Apps: Under Android licensing, device makers had to pre-install Google apps like Search, Chrome, and YouTube to get Play Store access. The CCI said this bundling reduced consumer choice and blocked innovation from competitors.

4. Penalties and Orders: The CCI fined Google ₹936.44 crore. It ordered changes such as separating GPBS from Play Store access, ensuring clear billing data rules, and stopping the use of such data to benefit Google's own services.

Google's Defence

1. Android as Open Source: Google said Android is free and open-source. Device makers can use it without the Play Store and without Google's proprietary apps.

2. User Experience and Security: Google argued that pre-installed apps save users time and improve convenience. GPBS ensured safe and reliable transactions, prevented fraud, and reduced payment failures.

3. Standard Pricing and Support: The commission rates were in line with global industry norms. Google said the fees supported infrastructure, global reach, and regular security updates.

4. Market Still Healthy: The exemption for YouTube was due to its business model. Google pointed to the growth of Indian apps like PhonePe, Paytm, and Hotstar as proof of competition.

NCLAT's Judgment

1. Partial Agreement with CCI: In March, NCLAT said GPBS rules and app bundling were misuse of market dominance.

2. Fine Reduction: The fine was cut from ₹936.44 crore to ₹216.69 crore. The tribunal said the original fine was too high.

3. Change in Directions: Some of the CCI's remedies were removed for being too broad or lacking strong evidence.

4. Review Decision: In May 2025, two remedies were restored. Google must be transparent about billing data policies. It also cannot use such data to benefit its own services.

5. Multiple Appeals: Google wanted all charges dropped. The CCI wanted its full orders restored. ADIF said the tribunal was too soft on Google.

Impact of the Case

1. For Consumers: A ruling for the CCI could mean more choice, lower prices, and stronger privacy protections.

2. For Smartphone Makers: The verdict could allow more freedom to pre-install other apps and use different Android versions. This could help smaller Indian brands compete.

3. For Developers: Local startups could get more payment options, better visibility, and fairer competition.

4. For Google: A loss could affect its large Indian market and trigger similar regulatory actions worldwide.

Road Ahead

1. Supreme Court Focus: The Court will look at the meaning of “abuse of dominance” under Indian law and how platform markets work.

2. Long-Term Effect: The ruling will affect how over 95% of Indian smartphone users access apps and make payments.

3. Possible Results: A strong win for the CCI could make India a global leader in strict digital market rules. A Google win would maintain the present system.

Question for practice:

Discuss the implications of the Supreme Court case between CCI and Google on competition and consumer rights in India.

India navigates US tariffs and Russian oil pressures pragmatically

Source: The post India navigates US tariffs and Russian oil pressures pragmatically has been created, based on the article “Russian oil: Sifting politics from economics” published in “Businessline” on 12th August 2025

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

Context: The upcoming August 15 meeting between Russian and US leaders in Alaska could have major implications for the global oil market. India, a top fossil fuel consumer with strong ties to Russia, faces heightened pressure after a US tariff decision linked to its Russian oil imports.

US Tariffs and India's Position

1. Executive Order and Tariff Decision: On August 6, the US announced a 25% tariff on Indian imports, effective August 27, over India's continued purchase of Russian oil. The order also outlined possible similar measures against other importers.

2. Link to Russia-Ukraine Conflict: The tariff was framed as part of addressing the national emergency caused by Russia's actions in Ukraine. The US linked India's oil imports directly to this geopolitical issue.

3. Criticism of the Move: Experts criticised the tariff as unfair and lacking understanding of global oil market complexities, noting it ignored India's diverse sourcing strategy.

India's Oil Import Landscape

1. Diverse Supply Sources: India imports oil from 40 countries, including Russia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the US, and Nigeria. Purchases are based on economic viability rather than political considerations.

2. India's Share in Russian Exports: From Dec 2022 to July 2025, Russia exported 47% of its crude to China, 38% to India, and 6% each to the EU and Turkey, showing India is not alone in buying Russian oil.

3. Separation of Politics and Economics: So far, India has kept political disputes separate from energy trade decisions to safeguard national interests.

Strategic and Policy Options

1. **LNG Imports from the US:** Experts suggested increasing LNG imports from the US, reducing Russian oil purchases to around 20%, and exploring the shorter Alaska route to ease US pressure and advance energy transition goals.
2. **Building Strategic Petroleum Reserves:** Experts stressed expanding SPR capacity. Currently, three reserves provide only 10 days of backup for India's 5.5 million barrels/day demand. Two more are under construction but will not fully resolve supply risks.
3. **Long-Term Agreements and Risk Mitigation:** Identifying low-risk suppliers and securing long-term deals could reduce last-minute market pressures.

Challenges in Implementation

1. **Limited Immediate Solutions:** Experts observed that practical options are few, apart from diplomatic engagement and maintaining diverse crude sources, making US tariffs especially damaging.
2. **Dependency on Imports:** India imports 88% of its oil needs, making it vulnerable to external shocks despite diversification.

Government's Energy Strategy

1. **Multi-Dimensional Approach:** The Petroleum Minister outlined strategies including diversifying crude imports, boosting domestic output, developing alternative fuels, expanding refining capacity to 310 MMTPA by 2028, and growing petrochemicals into a \$300 billion industry by 2030.
2. **Balancing Rhetoric and Economics:** Long-term success depends on separating political narratives from economic logic while sustaining reforms to navigate global energy volatility.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges and strategies of India in managing energy security amid US tariffs on its Russian oil imports.

India needs stronger contract enforcement for economic growth

Source: The post India needs stronger contract enforcement for economic growth has been created, based on the article "Efficient contract enforcement would brighten India's prospects" published in "Live Mint" on 13th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Government-dispute resolution

Context: Efficient contract enforcement is vital for competitiveness. In India, **delays and uncertainty cost 1.5-2% of GDP annually**, with greater **opportunity losses** from deferred investments. Early reforms improved timelines, but progress has slowed, leaving India **poorly ranked globally**.

Economic Impact and International Models

1. **Heavy Economic Costs:** Procedural delays act as a **hidden tax** on enterprises. **Opportunity costs are two to three times higher** than direct GDP losses due to postponed investments.
2. **Lessons from Leading Economies:** Countries like **the US and China** strengthened dispute resolution systems to boost investment and growth.
3. **The US Approach:** The **Federal Arbitration Act**, expert judges, and **specialized commercial divisions** in states like New York and Delaware ensure efficient enforcement. Structured case management and judicial expertise support quick resolution.

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4. Cross-Border Dispute Handling: The US follows the **New York Convention** and maintains **specialized commercial courts** for international disputes, enabling strong investor confidence.

India's Reform Experience

1. Gains from 2014–2018: The **Commercial Courts Act**, amendments to the **Arbitration and Conciliation Act**, and creation of the **Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration** reduced average enforcement time in Delhi and Mumbai from **1,445 days to 626**.

2. Post-2019 Slowdown: Few reforms, like the **Mediation Act**, have been enacted. India's global ranking on contract enforcement remains low.

3. Persisting Structural Issues: Design gaps in courts and lack of a **consistent pro-arbitration stance** hinder sustained improvement.

Core Challenges

1. Appeal-Driven Litigation: **Wide grounds for appeal**, absence of a “loser pays” rule, and weak court scrutiny encourage **frivolous challenges**.

2. Government as a Major Litigant: **PSUs and government bodies** are frequent litigants, often contesting awards and delaying resolution.

3. Weak Arbitration Infrastructure: Dependence on ad-hoc arbitration and lack of **credible domestic institutions** push companies to costly foreign forums, excluding **MSMEs** from efficient resolution.

Reforming Arbitration and Courts

1. Strengthening Domestic Institutions: Governments should fund and support **independent arbitration bodies**, improve caseload handling, and enhance credibility.

2. Narrowing Appeal Grounds: Legislation should **restrict public policy appeals** and limit judicial interference.

3. Pro-Arbitration Judicial Stance: Ensure award finality, apply penalties for frivolous appeals, and make domestic seats **mandatory for government contracts** with pre-appeal screening.

4. Making Commercial Courts Effective: Raise **monetary thresholds**, focus on **high-value complex cases**, appoint trained judges with longer tenure, build digital systems, and **benchmark performance** for accountability.

Cross-Border Dispute Resolution

1. Weakening Treaty Network: India has cut **Bilateral Investment Treaties** from over 68 to fewer than a dozen, weakening investor protection.

2. Reform Opportunities: New trade agreements should enable **time-bound dispute resolution**, fast-track award enforcement, and better investor safeguards.

Conclusion

Legal certainty is as critical as tariff stability. Judiciary, executive, and legislature must work together to ensure **timely, reliable, and investor-friendly contract enforcement** for sustained growth

Question for practice:

Examine the key challenges and reform measures needed to strengthen contract enforcement and dispute resolution mechanisms in India.

US Russia Alaska peace talks and India's strategic concerns

Source: The post US Russia Alaska peace talks and India's strategic concerns has been created, based on the article "The challenge in Alaska" published in "Indian Express" on 13th August 2025

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

Context: The Alaska peace talks between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin mark a key shift in US-Russia ties after years of hostility. Talks on Ukraine and broader relations may reshape Eurasian security. India, facing US tariffs over Russian oil imports, has a direct stake in the outcome.

Historical and Political Backdrop

1. Past Engagements and Deteriorating Ties: Putin's last US visit was in 2015. Later meetings occurred in Helsinki (2018) and Geneva (2021). Relations have worsened since the late 2000s due to NATO's eastward expansion, Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the 2022 Ukraine invasion.

2. Political Risks for Trump: Hosting Putin is bold given two decades of US hostility, suspicions about Trump's Russia ties, and Democratic impeachment attempts during his first term.

Trump's Strategic Approach

1. Breaking from Entrenched Policy: Trump seeks to move away from the traditional US stance toward Russia. Freed from first-term constraints, he appears determined to pursue a new relationship.

2. The "Peace President" Claim: He asserts the invasion would not have happened under him and promises to end wars quickly. This aligns with the MAGA rejection of "endless wars" and emphasis on domestic rebuilding.

3. Peace-for-Profit Logic: Trump links peace to economic gain. Ideas include turning Gaza into a resort, securing mineral rights in Ukraine, trading with Russia, and selling Pakistani oil to India.

Peace-for-Business Proposals

1. Commercially Linked De-escalation: Plans include structured oil and LNG flows, protection for energy infrastructure, and penalties for renewed hostilities. Arctic cooperation is also considered.

2. Strategic Resource Trade: Proposals explore controlled trade in critical minerals and rare earths.

3. Implementation Barriers: Resistance in Congress and Europe, Ukraine's opposition, and complex war-ending negotiations pose serious hurdles.

Core Issues in the Peace Talks

1. Ceasefire and Territorial Disputes: A verifiable halt to fighting is debated. Russia wants recognition of its control over Crimea and occupied regions; Ukraine rejects land-for-peace deals.

2. Security and NATO Expansion: Moscow demands limits on NATO membership and Western military aid to Ukraine. Kyiv insists on sovereign choice of security partners.

3. Sanctions Relief and Enforcement: Russia wants quick sanctions removal; the West seeks concessions first. Effective monitoring and dispute resolution are essential for any deal.

Divergent Stakeholder Interests

1. US, Russia, and Ukraine Goals: Trump wants a quick win. Moscow seeks a lasting role in European security and to halt NATO expansion. Ukraine demands full sovereignty.

2. European and Chinese Concerns: Europe is split between “ceasefire first” and Ukraine’s inclusion in talks. Leaders fear a “Yalta-style” deal. Beijing worries a US-Russia thaw could shift US focus toward China.

India’s Position and Lessons

1. Strategic Implications: A US-Russia reconciliation may help India, but tariffs show risks of being collateral damage.

2. Historical Experience: During past détente, Russia prioritised US and European ties over India. Delhi must maintain independent relations with all powers and avoid entanglement in great power conflicts.

Question for practice:

Examine the strategic, political, and economic implications of the Alaska peace talks between the United States and Russia for global security and India's foreign policy.

Supreme Court order on street dogs raises legal concerns

Source: The post Supreme Court order on street dogs raises legal concerns has been created, based on the article “A CONVENIENT SMOKESCREEN” published in “**Indian Express**” on 13th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

Context: On August 11, the Supreme Court ordered that all street dogs in Delhi be moved to shelters within eight weeks, after reports of fatal attacks on infants. While addressing safety concerns, the order raises legal, procedural, and governance issues, and risks undermining established animal welfare frameworks.

For detailed information on **Judicial Views on Killing Stray Dogs** [read this article here](#)

Judicial Intervention and Legal Concerns

1. Background and Trigger: The Court acted suo motu after a news report about fatal dog attacks. It highlighted risks posed by unvaccinated dogs to children, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups.

2. Contradiction with Laws: The order violates the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, which prohibit relocation and instead require scientific birth control programmes. Ignoring these laws makes the decision arbitrary and sets a harmful precedent.

3. Departure from Judicial Consistency: The Supreme Court had already resolved this matter in *Animal Welfare Board of India vs People for Elimination of Stray Troubles* (2024). Revisiting it without new facts undermines the principle of stare decisis, reducing faith in the finality of judgments and diverting resources from actual implementation.

Procedural and Constitutional Issues

1. Ignoring Stakeholders: Parties with legal standing were denied participation, and suggestions of the amicus curiae were disregarded. This breaches the principle of *audi alteram partem* (hear the other side).

2. Lack of Evidence and Reasoning: The decision is unscientific, impractical, and does not consider public health, safety, or financial implications. It lacks transparency and accountable reasoning.

3. Conflict with Fundamental Duties: Article 51A(g) requires citizens to have compassion for living creatures. Threatening punitive action against those opposing relocation risks punishing individuals for fulfilling this constitutional duty.

Failures Driving Human-Canine Conflict

1. Local Governance Gaps: Many municipal bodies fail to implement humane animal birth control and anti-rabies vaccination. Rabid dogs are not humanely euthanised promptly, increasing risks.

2. Poor Waste Management: Inadequate solid waste disposal sustains stray dog populations, worsening conflict.

3. Policy Focus Misplaced: Targeting street dogs is a distraction from the failure of authorities to perform their legal duties in population control and public health measures.

Path to Sustainable Solutions

1. Addressing Root Causes: The problem cannot be solved through relocation orders alone. Strengthening birth control, vaccination drives, and waste management is essential.

2. Ensuring Balanced Intervention: Judicial actions should be lawful, evidence-based, and coordinated with executive agencies to avoid polarisation and politicisation.

Question for practice:

Discuss the legal and governance challenges in addressing human-canine conflict in India.

India needs urgent action to bridge organ donation gap

Source: The post India needs urgent action to bridge organ donation gap has been created, based on the article “Clear the myths, recognise organ donation as a lifeline” published in “The Hindu” on 13th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

Context: Organ transplantation is a medical breakthrough, yet India faces an alarming shortage of donor organs. Despite progress, myths, misconceptions, and low awareness cause **over half a million preventable deaths each year**. The article explains barriers, awareness strategies, and policy actions needed to meet the demand.

For detailed information on **Organ donation in India** [read this article](#)

The Current State of Organ Transplantation in India

1. Low Donation Rate Despite Growth: The number of transplants rose from **4,990 in 2013 to 18,378 in 2023**, but only **1,099 were from deceased donors**. India's donation rate is **0.8 per million**, far below **over 45 per million in Spain and the US**. This gap costs countless lives every year.

2. Preventable Fatalities: A lack of organs is not due to medical limits but social and systemic obstacles. Losing a life because of this shortage is a **preventable tragedy** that demands urgent attention.

Myths and Misconceptions Hindering Donations

- 1. Concerns About Body Integrity and Rituals:** Families fear organ donation will **disfigure the body** or disrupt funeral rites. In reality, retrieval is done with **utmost respect**, preserving appearance for ceremonies. Religious leaders across faiths support donation as an act of **compassion**.
- 2. Mistrust in Brain Death Procedures:** Some believe doctors might **prematurely declare brain death** to take organs. The **Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994** ensures strict medical criteria, **multidisciplinary expert boards**, repeated assessments, and detailed legal documentation.
- 3. Wrong Assumptions About Age and Health:** Many assume only young accident victims can donate. However, organs and tissues such as **kidneys, liver segments, lungs, corneas, bone, skin, and heart valves** can be donated by older individuals or those dying of natural causes.

Strategies to Increase Awareness and Participation

- 1. Media and Personal Stories:** Television, social media, and sharing real donor and recipient experiences can **inspire action** and counter myths, especially among youth.
- 2. Community and Educational Efforts:** Workshops led by trained counsellors address concerns about rituals, protocols, and eligibility. Including organ donation education in **schools and colleges** builds a lifelong culture of giving.
- 3. Healthcare Professional Engagement:** Doctors, nurses, and transplant coordinators need training to hold **compassionate and informed** discussions with families. Dedicated coordination teams can guide decision-making with clarity.

Policy and System Reforms

- 1. Exploring Presumed Consent:** Countries like **Spain and Croatia** use a system where every adult is a donor unless they opt out. India could adopt this, with **ethical oversight** and strong family support mechanisms.
- 2. Building Public Confidence:** Grievance redress systems and transparent processes are vital to maintain trust in the donation framework.

A National Call to Action

- 1. Shared Duty and Urgency:** Organ donation is a **noble legacy**. Every eligible adult should register, and families should honour this choice.
- 2. Sustained Commitment:** Through awareness drives, reforms, and community engagement, **no Indian should die for lack of an organ**. On **World Organ Donation Day**, the nation must pledge to embrace this cause as a **collective responsibility**.

Question for practice:

Examine the key barriers and solutions to increasing organ donation in India.

Preserving academic freedom is vital for higher education

Source: The post Preserving academic freedom is vital for higher education has been created, based on the article “**The ceding of academic freedom in universities**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 14th August 2025

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

Context: Academic freedom is vital for higher education, enabling questioning, debate, and independent thought. It fosters knowledge creation, innovation, and societal progress. The article examines how such freedom is essential, how it is threatened in India and elsewhere, and why autonomy with accountability must be preserved. For detailed information on **Universities are losing their freedom and academic purpose** [read this article here](#)

The Essence of Academic Freedom

1. Freedom to Question and Learn: Universities must allow students and faculty to question existing knowledge and explore ideas freely. Learning begins with understanding and progresses through critique and resistance to unquestioned authority.

2. Institutional Independence in Teaching: Decisions about what is taught should rest with universities, free from external interference. Restricting speakers or discussions on campus stifles learning and harms social and economic progress.

3. Research Autonomy and Creativity: Universities and faculty should set research priorities. Funding decisions must be peer-reviewed and free from bias. Dissent and unconventional thinking are crucial for advancing knowledge, particularly in fundamental research, which requires time, resources, and freedom.

The Disturbing Reality in India

1. State Control over Curriculum and Readings: Curricula are rigid and centrally regulated. Reading lists are prescribed externally, sometimes excluding certain works. Unorthodox research, especially in social sciences and humanities, is suppressed.

2. Funding and Research Constraints: Government departments and councils control research funding. This limits fundamental research, contributing to the absence of Nobel laureates from Indian universities.

3. Curbs on Expression and Campus Discourse: Discussions critical of the ruling party are restricted, with administrative or legal actions taken against participants. Social media posts can also trigger penalties.

4. Restrictions on Academic Participation Abroad: Faculty in central universities must sign undertakings not to engage in anti-government activities abroad, with disciplinary action for violations. Private universities are increasingly adopting similar controls due to political pressure.

Autonomy and Accountability

1. Universities' Role Beyond Education: Universities contribute to science, technology, innovation, and policy. Faculty act as public intellectuals, informing society and fostering political accountability.

2. Autonomy with Checks and Balances: Government funding does not justify control. Public universities must be accountable to students and society through strong governance structures, not political interference.

3. Role of Rankings: University rankings, despite flaws, provide a mechanism for public accountability and informed choice for students and parents.

4. Need for Regulatory Reform: Universities require full administrative, financial, and academic autonomy. Reforming restrictive acts and freeing institutions from the University Grants Commission's control is essential for fostering diversity and excellence.

Global Patterns of Control

1. Democracies Limiting Freedoms: Countries like Argentina, Hungary, and Türkiye impose controls despite being democracies.

2. Authoritarian and One-Party States: Dictatorships in Africa and Asia, and one-party states like China, Russia, and Vietnam, heavily restrict academic freedom. China maintains strict speech controls but ensures high-quality academic appointments.

3. Shifts in the United States: Even in the U.S., long a bastion of academic freedom, research funding cuts and restrictions under the Trump administration threaten its global leadership in education and innovation.

Why Governments Seek Control

1. Fear of Criticism and Dissent: Governments often fear questions from autonomous universities, seeking ideological conformity instead.

2. Dependence on State Funding: Universities reliant on government grants may compromise autonomy. Individual academics may self-censor due to fear, incentives, or rewards.

3. Consequences of Lost Freedom: Without academic freedom, teaching, research, creativity, and critical thinking suffer. Ultimately, society, the economy, and democracy are the losers.

Question for practice:

Discuss the importance of academic freedom in higher education.

India seeks to expand role in global drone market

Source: The post India seeks to expand role in global drone market has been created, based on the article “A war game-changer in a battle for influence in Asia” published in “The Hindu” on 14th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology. And Security challenges.

Context: The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict showed how drones are changing wars. In 2024, Operation Sindoor confirmed this shift for India and Pakistan. Drones moved from reconnaissance roles to precision strike platforms. This change has pushed India to modernise its unmanned aerial systems.

For detailed information on **Drone Revolution Changing the Face of Rural India** [read this article here](#)

Transformation in Warfare and India's Drone Needs

1. From Reconnaissance to Precision Strikes: In Operation Sindoor, drones played a decisive role. They were not only gathering intelligence but also hitting targets with precision.

2. Varied Terrain and Border Challenges: India's borders with China and Pakistan include high-altitude regions. These areas need long-range UAVs that can carry heavy payloads. Smaller, cheaper systems are also needed for specific strike missions.

3. Current Inventory Limitations: India uses Israeli Harop and Heron drones. These are older models. India also operates older imports and some domestic drones. Many of these do not meet current operational demands.

Procurement Trends and Global Supply Considerations

1. Recent Acquisitions from the U.S.: In 2024, India ordered 31 MQ-9B Reaper drones from the U.S. This will help maritime surveillance and strengthen U.S. ties. However, this does not meet all of India's needs.

2. Shifting from Full Imports to Component Sourcing: India may not buy full U.S. systems in the future. Instead, it may focus on buying key parts like engines and payloads.

3. Global Competitors and U.S. Shortcomings: The U.S. is losing ground to China and Türkiye in drone exports. In 2023, it had only 8% of the global market. Strict MTCR rules slowed its exports, though reforms may improve this.

Strategic Gaps and Opportunities for India

1. Limited Supplier Options: India cannot depend on China or Türkiye for defence technology. Israel is busy with its own conflicts. India is turning to Israel and Europe for cooperation.

2. Scope for Regional Supply Role: India's needs match those of many Indo-Pacific nations. If India develops drones for itself, these could also meet their needs.

4. Preventing Rival Influence: By supplying drones to the region, India can reduce Türkiye's influence.

The China Factor in Regional Security

1. Maritime Domain Awareness Needs: Countries like Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan face Chinese maritime pressure. They need drones to track "gray-zone" activities.

2. Protection of Sovereignty and Resources: Such systems protect fisheries, energy zones, and borders from Chinese intrusion.

3. Strategic Partnerships Potential: India can work with these countries to improve their surveillance and defence capabilities.

Building India's Domestic UAV Ecosystem

1. Overcoming Institutional Hurdles: India's defence sector is slowed by bureaucracy and public sector control.

2. Leveraging Joint Ventures: Partnerships with Israel and Europe can improve technology and production skills.

3. Technology-Sharing in the Indo-Pacific: Sharing drone technology with friendly nations can boost trust and regional security.

Question for practice:

Examine the opportunities and challenges for India in developing and exporting drones in the Indo-Pacific region.

African nations challenge China's long dominance in mining sector

Source: The post African nations challenge China's long dominance in mining sector has been created, based on the article "Africa is challenging China's mining hegemony" published in "The Hindu" on 14th August 2025

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

Context: China's long-standing dominance in Africa's mining sector is facing growing resistance. Increased government scrutiny, civil society activism, and demands for value-added development are challenging the old extraction-focused model. African nations are now asserting sovereignty, renegotiating contracts, and enforcing policies to ensure fairer benefits from their mineral wealth.

For detailed information on **Partnerships with Africa can help secure India's Critical Mineral Mission** [read this article here](#)

Shifting Dynamics in Africa-China Mining Relations

1. Growing Demand for Fair Partnerships: African governments and civil society groups are pushing for equitable deals. The earlier exchange of raw resources for infrastructure is seen as inadequate. Nations now seek accountability, transparency, and economic sovereignty.

2. Critical Mineral Wealth and Control: The DRC holds 80% of the world's cobalt reserves, vital for rechargeable batteries. China controls most of this output through deals like Sicomin. However, the Congolese people have received limited benefits compared to the resources extracted.

Rising Challenges to Chinese Investments

1. Economic Discontent and Contract Reviews: Tax exemptions to Chinese companies cost the DRC about \$132 million in 2024. This loss has sparked public anger and calls to review the Sicomin deal. Market-linked payments risk reducing infrastructure gains during commodity downturns.

2. Government Action and Canceled Deals: The DRC is renegotiating Chinese contracts, aiming to increase its stake in joint ventures from 32% to 70%. Opposition from state miner Gecamines halted the sale of Chemaf Resources to China's Norin Mining.

3. Corruption and Unfulfilled Promises: Namibia's Xinfeng Investments faces bribery allegations over a lithium mine acquisition. Despite large exports of raw ore to China, promised processing facilities remain unbuilt, and workers report unsafe conditions.

Environmental and Social Backlash

1. Regulatory Pushback on Mining Projects: In Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, coal mining applications by a Chinese firm were blocked for environmental reasons. Zambia faced a major acid spill from a Chinese-owned copper mine contaminating the Kafue River.

2. Local Resistance to Large-Scale Projects: In Cameroon, NGOs oppose the Lobé-Kribi Iron Ore Project over environmental, health, and cultural risks. Communities criticize inadequate consultation and lack of benefit-sharing.

Policy Shifts Toward Value Addition

1. Export Bans to Encourage Processing: Zimbabwe banned unprocessed lithium exports in 2022, followed by Namibia in 2023. These measures aim to compel investors to establish local processing plants and retain more value domestically.

2. Need for Broader Economic Strategies: Export bans alone are insufficient. Without local capacity building and inclusive policies, resource exploitation could persist in new forms, benefiting elites rather than communities.

Emerging Future of Africa-China Mining Relations

1. Declining Certainty of Chinese Dominance: While China remains Africa's largest mining partner, its dominance is no longer assured. African nations are challenging opaque contracts, enforcing environmental protections, and demanding local value addition.

2. Path to Economic Transformation: If these trends continue, African countries could shift from raw material exporters to integral players in the global green economy, reshaping the mineral supply chain and reducing dependency on China.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors driving Africa's pushback against China's mining dominance.

Government plans to revise income limits for student scholarships

Source: The post Government plans to revise income limits for student scholarships has been created, based on the article "How can SC/ST scholarships be expanded?" published in "The Hindu" on 14th August 2025

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

Context: The Union government is reviewing the **parental income limit** for post and pre-matric scholarships for marginalised castes and tribes for **FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31**. The aim is to **expand access** by revising the current ₹2.5 lakh annual cap, following recommendations from parliamentary panels.

Proposed Revisions to Income Limits

1. Increase for ST Scholarships: The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** plans to raise the **parental income limit** for post and pre-matric ST scholarships from ₹2.5 lakh to ₹4.5 lakh. This applies to students from grades IX onwards, and in some cases, grades I-X.

2. Possible Changes for SC, OBC, and DNT Scholarships: The **Social Justice Ministry** is considering revising income limits for SC, OBC, and DNT students in both school and college scholarship schemes. The goal is to improve access across all sections.

Structure and Coverage of Current Schemes

1. Central Sponsorship Model: Scholarships for SCs, STs, and OBCs operate under a **centrally sponsored scheme**. The **Union and State governments** share costs in a **60:40 ratio**, with a **90:10 ratio** for northeast States.

2. Post and Pre-Matric Criteria: **Post-matric scholarships** are for students after Class X. **Pre-matric schemes** cover Class IX-X, but for SCs in hazardous occupations, coverage is from Class I-X. **Current eligibility** requires parental income below ₹2.5 lakh.

Budgetary Allocation

1. Social Justice Ministry Share: In **FY 2025-26**, centrally sponsored scholarship schemes for SCs, OBCs, EBCs, and DNTs formed **66.7%** of the **₹13,611 crore** Social Justice Department budget.

2. Tribal Affairs Ministry Share: For the same fiscal year, schemes for ST students accounted for **18.6%** of the **₹14,925.81 crore** allocation of the Tribal Affairs Ministry.

Declining Beneficiary Numbers

1. Reductions for SC Beneficiaries: From **2020-21 to 2024-25**, pre-matric SC scholarship beneficiaries dropped by **30.63%**, and post-matric beneficiaries by **4.22%**.

2. Drops Among OBC, EBC, and DNT Groups: Between **2021-22 and 2023-24**, pre-matric beneficiaries fell from **58.62 lakh** to about **20.25 lakh**. Post-matric numbers declined from **43.34 lakh** to **38.42 lakh**.

3. ST Beneficiary Declines: In the same period, ST pre-matric recipients dropped by **4.63 lakh**, and post-matric recipients by **3.52 lakh**.

Parliamentary Panel Recommendations

1. Call for Higher Income Limits: The **Parliamentary Committee on Welfare of OBCs** urged **doubling** the current income limit for OBC pre and post-matric scholarships. It also suggested a “suitable rise” for top-class scholarships.

2. Expanding Pre-Matric Coverage: The panel recommended extending OBC pre-matric scholarships from **Class V onwards**, instead of starting at Class IX.

3. ST Scholarship Revisions: Another committee reviewing **Tribal Affairs** and **Social Justice ministries** recommended raising parental income limits for ST scholarships.

Rationale for Changes

1. Barriers Due to Low Income Limits: Committees observed that the **₹2.5 lakh cap** excludes many deserving families, limiting access despite available funds.

2. Goal of Wider Access: Raising income limits can **increase coverage**, helping more students from marginalised groups and potentially **reversing the decline** in beneficiaries.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons and recommendations for revising income limits of scholarships for marginalised communities.

India builds deeper partnership with Namibia and Africa

Source: The post India builds deeper partnership with Namibia and Africa has been created, based on the article “In Namibia, India shows a new way to engage Africa” published in “**The Hindu**” on 18th August 2025

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

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's July 2025 address to Namibia's National Assembly highlighted India's evolving engagement in Africa. His culturally nuanced remarks signalled a long-term, respectful partnership model, contrasting with the **West's conditional aid, sanctions, and migration-focused assistance**.

India's Adaptive Diplomatic Strategy

1. Cultural Sensitivity in Diplomacy: Modi invoked the **Welwitschia mirabilis**, Namibia's national plant, the **Springbok**, and quoted a Namibian poet. His use of **Oshiwambo phrases** earned applause, showing India's effort to connect meaningfully with African identity.

2. Three-Step Logic of Engagement: India's approach follows three steps: **anti-colonial solidarity**, **current pragmatic cooperation**, and **future-oriented knowledge ties**. This method reflects **alignment over instruction** and a grounded, adaptive strategy.

3. Coalition-Building Approach: India prioritises **issue-based coalitions** shaped by mutual interests. This builds trust and ensures African priorities drive the agenda.

Shared Historical Foundations

- 1. Anti-Colonial Solidarity:** India recalls hosting **SWAPO's first diplomatic office** during Namibia's liberation struggle. It also highlights **Lieutenant General Diwan Prem Chand's leadership** of UN peacekeeping forces during Namibia's transition to independence.
- 2. Symbolism as Commitment:** These reminders reinforce India's **long-haul engagement**. They contrast with the **episodic presence of Western powers**.
- 3. History as Strategic Anchor:** Historical solidarity builds credibility and positions India as a **consistent, principled partner**.

Present Cooperation and Development

- 1. Trade and Development Footprint:** Bilateral trade between India and Namibia is **\$800 million**. Across Africa, India sustains a **\$12 billion development partnership**.
- 2. Capacity Building in Education and IT:** India set up the **India-Namibia Centre of Excellence in IT** at the Namibia University of Science and Technology. It also funded the **'India Wing' at Ongwediva campus** with a **\$12 million grant**.
- 3. People-Centric Development:** These initiatives leverage India's strengths in **digital education** and respond to Namibia's **youthful, digitally ready population**.

Future-Oriented Knowledge Diplomacy

- 1. Digital Transformation with UPI:** Namibia became the **first African country** to adopt **India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**. This marks a quiet revolution in **tech diplomacy**.
- 2. Exporting Institutional Models:** The UPI adoption is not only about digital tools but also about **regulatory frameworks, institutional design, and user-centric architecture** that India has tested at scale.
- 3. Soft Power through Technology:** This cooperation creates **long-term, people-focused partnerships** and enhances India's **soft power**.

Challenges and Missed Chances

- 1. Inconsistent Engagement:** India's Africa policy has seen long lapses. Modi's visit to Namibia was the **first by an Indian head of government in nearly three decades**.
- 2. Limited Outcomes:** The visit resulted in only **two MoUs** on entrepreneurship and health, and Namibia's accession to the **Global Biofuels Alliance** and the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**.
- 3. Mineral Cooperation Gap:** Despite Namibia's role as a **leading uranium producer**, no strategic framework was concluded on minerals, resource access, or value addition. A major opportunity was missed.

Toward a Credible Global South Partner

- 1. Namibia's Strategic Importance:** Namibia offers **political stability, mineral wealth, and technological readiness**. Its leadership echoes India's calls for **fairer global systems**.

2. **Need for Follow-Through:** The upcoming **India-Africa Forum Summit** could formalise cooperation. But India must match ambition with **sustained institutional commitment**.

3. **Credibility through Consistency:** India's role as a **Global South leader** will depend not on promises but on **consistent, collaborative delivery**.

Question for practice:

Discuss how India's evolving engagement with Namibia reflects its broader approach to Africa.

India faces challenges in expanding ethanol blending

Source: The post India faces challenges in expanding ethanol blending has been created, based on the article "**What has been the impact of ethanol blending?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 18th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Infrastructures- Energy,

Context: India has reached its target of blending 20% ethanol with petrol five years ahead of schedule under the National Policy on Biofuels. The government highlights benefits such as lower emissions, reduced oil imports, and higher farmer income. Yet, consumer concerns, environmental costs, and the transition to cleaner options remain debated.

For detailed information on **Ethanol Blending Programme (E20 Blending)- Significance and Challenges** [read this article here](#)

Consumer Reactions and Concerns

1. **Compatibility of Vehicles:** Vehicles sold since 2023 carry E20 labels, showing fuel compatibility. Manufacturers, including Hero Motocorp, upgraded materials like rubbers and plastics in older vehicles to withstand ethanol exposure.

2. **Public Opposition:** A LocalCircles survey across 315 districts found **two in three petrol vehicle owners opposed E20**. Only 12% supported it, citing **reduced mileage and higher maintenance**. Consumers demanded freedom to choose fuel type.

3. **Government's Stand:** The Centre admitted a **marginal drop in efficiency**, but argued better tuning and compatible materials can reduce it. Minister Hardeep Singh Puri dismissed criticism as a "**vilification campaign**" driven by vested interests.

4. **NITI Aayog's Advice:** NITI Aayog suggested compensating consumers for efficiency losses through **tax incentives on E10 and E20**, balancing policy goals with fairness to users.

Financial and Policy Dimensions

1. **Foreign Exchange Savings:** Since 2014-15, India claims savings of **₹1.40 lakh crore** by petrol substitution with ethanol. This is presented as proof of blending's economic success.

2. **PSU Contributions:** Between 2020-21 and 2024-25, oil PSUs like IOC, BPCL, ONGC, Coal India, and GAIL contributed **₹1.27 lakh crore in dividends**, about **42.3% of total non-banking PSU dividends**.

3. **Limited Relief for Consumers:** Despite a **65% fall in oil prices**, PSUs reduced petrol prices by only **2%**, while dividend payouts rose sharply. This raised concerns about whether the financial benefits reached the public.

Agricultural and Environmental Impact

1. Dependence on Sugarcane: Ethanol output from sugarcane grew from **40 crore litres in 2014 to 670 crore litres in 2024**. Farmers received **₹1.20 lakh crore since FY15**. Yet, sugarcane cultivation requires **60–70 tonnes of water per tonne**, stressing water-scarce regions.

2. Groundwater Stress and Land Degradation: The **2023 Central Groundwater Board** found excess groundwater extraction in Maharashtra's sugarcane districts. The **2021 Land Degradation Atlas** reported **30% of India's land degraded**, worsened by unsustainable farming and climate stress.

3. Crop Diversification Efforts: FCI allocated **5.2 million tonnes of rice** for ethanol in 2024, up from 3,000 tonnes earlier. **34% of corn output** was diverted, forcing **9.7 lakh tonnes of imports** in 2024-25, six times the previous year. Yet, sugarcane acreage rose to **57.24 lakh hectares**.

4. Future Outlook: The OECD-FAO estimates that by 2034, **22% of sugarcane will go to ethanol**. The assured **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)** makes sugarcane an attractive crop, limiting a shift to sustainable alternatives.

Trade and Global Pressures

1. U.S. Push for Imports: The U.S. has called India's ethanol policy a major **"trade barrier"**. Relaxing restrictions could hurt domestic producers who invested heavily in ethanol capacity.

2. Industry Response: The **Indian Sugar Mills Association** urged the government to maintain restrictions to protect India's ethanol economy from foreign competition.

Ethanol and the EV Transition

1. Emission Reductions: The Centre says blending reduced **700 lakh tonnes of CO₂**. However, EVs promise **greater emission cuts** and faster transport decarbonisation, as shown in Beijing's clean-air success.

2. Slow EV Growth: In 2024, only **7.6% of vehicle sales were electric**. To meet the **2030 target of 30%**, sales must rise by **22% in five years**.

3. Rare Earth Dependency: India's EV production depends on rare earth imports, mainly from China. Disruptions led **Maruti Suzuki to cut EV targets**, with other firms also facing delays. Diplomatic talks with Beijing aim to ease shortages.

4. Policy Uncertainty: While Minister Puri signalled pushing beyond 20% blending, the government clarified in March that **no decision has been taken yet**, leaving future direction unclear.

Question for practice:

Examine the economic, environmental, and consumer challenges of India's E20 ethanol blending policy.

Families sustain caste while youth challenge it

Source: The post Families sustain caste while youth challenge it has been created, based on the article **"How 'honour' killings in India are reinforced and legitimised"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 18th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Salient features of Indian Society

Context: The article explains why caste persists in India despite change. Caste endures through family, community, and social structures. Backlash rises where equality advances. Tamil Nadu shows strong public resistance and hidden pride. Shifting youth priorities may weaken caste's base over time.

How Caste Endures as a Social System

- 1. Household customs and boundaries:** Caste survives through household rules. **Families police interaction, marriage, and avoidance.** These rules are passed down and defended within homes.
- 2. Early internalisation by children:** Children learn limits before they can explain them. **Boundaries become normal early in life** and guide choices.
- 3. Community and institutional reinforcement:** Communities and wider structures legitimise caste behaviour. **This scaffolding** keeps the system resilient.

Empowerment, Inter-Caste Unions, and Backlash

- 1. Social justice opens integration:** Education and secure jobs for Dalits enable integration. **Access to quality education and meaningful work changes status.**
- 2. Equal footing and new relationships:** Workplaces, colleges, and cities create daily contact. **Romantic ties begin to cross caste lines,** challenging inherited barriers.
- 3. Inter-caste marriages and regional patterns:** States such as **Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Kerala** report more inter-caste marriages. **IHDS-II puts the national rate at about 5%.**
- 4. Honour killings where hierarchy is threatened:** These unions, often involving **Dalit men and dominant-caste women,** confront hierarchy. **Violence spikes where caste feels under siege.** Low violence can mean an untouched status quo.

Tamil Nadu's Caste Paradox

- 1. Strong civil society and public rejection:** Democratic voices in Tamil Nadu condemn caste killings. **The State has a vibrant civil society.**
- 2. Anonymity-driven online glorification:** Social media enables anonymous caste pride. Some accounts even defend killings. **Anonymity lowers restraint.**
- 3. Collective progress, individual conflict:** Public culture is anti-caste. **Private chats, groups, and posts still steer alliances and "honour."**
- 4. Liminal space and fear of loss:** Tamil Nadu lives between tradition and change. **Online pride shows fear of losing inherited power and anxiety.**

Family as the Core Vehicle of Caste

- 1. Beyond parties and organisations:** Parties and caste bodies reinforce divisions in public. **They are not the root of caste.**
- 2. Everyday practices transmit prejudice:** Rituals, marriage plans, and expectations pass bias to children. **Caste is learned as everyday common sense.**
- 3. Transgenerational persistence amid modernity:** Caste endures despite education, urbanisation, and new ideas. **Home training outlasts exposure.**

Changing Youth Priorities and Emerging Hope

- 1. Global shifts and new relationship models:** In South Korea and Japan, marriage and fertility fall. **Open partnerships, cohabitation, single living, and self-parenting** rise as the family loses centrality.
- 2. Urban Indian adolescents and autonomy:** Urban youths prioritise growth, well-being, and autonomy. **Traditional obligations** carry less weight.
- 3. Eroding caste's main vehicle:** As the family's centrality weakens, caste loses its carrier. **Change will be gradual**, not sudden.
- 4. Acknowledging contradiction and moving forward:** India stands at a crossroads. **Engagement and digital counter-narratives** can loosen caste's grip. Recognising the paradox is the first step to reform. **Tamil Nadu symbolises both contradiction and hope.** Change begins with families and everyday choices.

Question for practice:

Examine how family structures and changing youth preferences influence the persistence and possible erosion of the caste system in India.

India advances through resilience, science, and inclusive sustainable growth

Source: The post India advances through resilience, science, and inclusive sustainable growth has been created, based on the article **"The next leap forward"** published in **"Indian Express"** on 18th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- growth, development and employment.

Context: India's 79th Independence Day sparked a look back and ahead. The nation stands confident and resilient. It faced outside pressure in 1971 and in 1998. It now faces tariff headwinds. It grew stronger each time. Today's focus is inclusive, science-led growth, with pride in gains and awareness of pending tasks.

A Nation's Upward Arc

- 1. Hard-won confidence:** India sees itself as a rising power that has shaped its destiny since 1947 and emerged stronger after crises. It declares its time has come; no one can halt its rise.
- 2. Policy continuity in science:** Shastri's "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan," extended to "Jai Vigyan" and "Jai Anusandhan," anchors progress in technology and research. Vajpayee's line—IT for India, BT for Bharat—captures the twin engines.
- 3. Twin moments: celebration and stock-taking:** Independence Day marks pride in gains and clarity about unfinished tasks.

Economic Scale and Global Standing

- 1. GDP momentum:** In the last decade, GDP more than doubled and is projected at \$4.19 trillion in 2025, placing India fourth after the US (\$30.5T), China (\$19.2T), and Germany (\$4.74T).

PPP rank. In PPP, India is third at \$17.65T, behind China (\$40.72T) and the US (\$30.51T) in 2025.

- 2. Civilisational aspiration:** Rising scale reflects a resolve to reclaim India's legacy as a major economy.

Human Development and Technological Strides

- 1. From deprivation to capability:** 1947–1951 baselines were stark: GDP ~\$30B, 330M people, ~80% poverty, life expectancy 32 years, literacy 18.3%. By 2023–2025, poverty at the \$3/day (2021 PPP) line fell to 5.3%, literacy rose to 77%, and life expectancy to 72 years.
- 2. Frontiers in space:** Chandrayaan's south-polar landing and Mangalyaan signalled leadership in exploration.
- 3. Digital rails:** UPI processes over 10 billion monthly transactions and inspires global fintech.
- 4. Global talent footprint:** Indian-origin leaders helm major firms, showcasing intellectual and entrepreneurial reach.

Agriculture: Transformation and Next Leap

- 1. Output and trade strength:** Foodgrains rose from ~50 MMT to 353.9 MMT (2024–25). India is the top rice exporter at 20.2 MMT (FY25); public grain stocks exceed 90 MMT, above buffers.
- 2. Broad agro-growth:** Since Independence, horticulture output rose 15×, milk 11×, and eggs 77×. FY15–FY25 real GDP grew 6.5% annually; agri-GDP 4%, outpacing sub-1% population growth. India is a net agricultural exporter.
- 3. Nutrition and sanitation:** Child under-five nutrition gaps persist. Women's education, maternal health, and sanitation remain vital; ODF status is credited for aiding nutrition.
- 4. Subsidy reform:** Food and fertiliser subsidies total Rs 3.71 lakh crore in 2025–26 (Rs 2.03 lakh crore; Rs 1.67 lakh crore). Studies indicate 20–25% leakage. Rebalancing toward agri-R&D and efficient value chains is urged.

Comparative Lens and the Road to 2047

- 1. South Asian comparison:** India's per-capita income surpasses Pakistan and Bangladesh in nominal and PPP terms.
- 2. China gap:** In 2025, China's per-capita income is \$13,690 (PPP \$28,980) versus India's \$2,880 (PPP \$12,130).
- 3. Democracy and sustainability:** Democracy guides choices; environmental stewardship of soil, water, and air is essential for Viksit Bharat.
- 4. Policy priorities:** Achieving the 2047 vision needs faster, inclusive growth, fewer bureaucratic hurdles, and a scientific culture backed by investments. The world watches; India offers lessons to Asia and Africa and competes in high-tech sectors.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how rationalising food and fertiliser subsidies can advance India's Viksit Bharat 2047 goals.

India drives global hunger decline and advances nutrition security

Source: The post India drives global hunger decline and advances nutrition security has been created, based on the article "The path to ending global hunger runs through India" published in "The Hindu" on 19th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Food security

Context: The UN's 2025 State of Food Security and Nutrition reports global undernourishment at 673 million in 2024, down from 688 million in 2023. India's digitally enabled policies drive much of this progress. Yet pre-pandemic levels are unmet, and nutrition gaps, obesity, and deficiencies are rising.

For detailed information on **Global Hunger Index and India** [read this article here](#)

Global improvement and India's role

- 1. Reversal in global hunger:** Undernourishment now affects 8.2% of people, down from 2023, though above 2018's 7.3%. The trend has turned after the severe COVID-19 spike.
- 2. India's decisive contribution:** Policy investments in food security and nutrition underpin gains. Digital technology, smarter governance, and service delivery strengthened outcomes.
- 3. Measured national progress:** India's undernourishment fell from 14.3% in 2020–22 to 12% in 2022–24. About 30 million fewer people face hunger.
- 4. Scale and disruption context:** These results came despite the pandemic's disruption and India's large population base.

The PDS transformation

- 1. Digital backbone:** The Public Distribution System was revitalised through digitalisation, Aadhaar-enabled targeting, real-time tracking, and biometric authentication.
- 2. Portability and inclusion:** Electronic point-of-sale devices and One Nation One Ration Card made

entitlements portable nationwide, aiding migrants and vulnerable households.

3. **Crisis response and continuity:** These innovations enabled rapid pandemic scale-up and continued subsidised staples for more than 800 million people.

4. **Governance and delivery gains:** Improved delivery systems ensured reliable and timely access to food support.

From calories to nutrition

1. **Affordability challenge:** A healthy diet remains unaffordable for over 60% of people due to high prices, weak cold chains, and poor market linkages.

2. **Quality-focused programmes:** PM POSHAN (2011) and ICDS now emphasise dietary diversity and nutrition sensitivity, improving child development and public health prospects.

3. **Signs of dietary affordability progress:** New UN data shows advances in making healthy diets more affordable despite food inflation.

4. **Emerging nutrition burdens:** Even as hunger falls, malnutrition, obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies are rising among poor urban and rural groups.

Transforming the agrifood system

1. **Nutrient-rich supply and prices:** India must boost production and affordability of pulses, fruits, vegetables, and animal-source foods for low-income families.

2. **Post-harvest infrastructure:** Invest in cold storage and digital logistics to cut the 13% food loss between farm and market, improving availability and prices.

3. **Inclusive enterprise support:** Strengthen women-led food businesses and FPOs, especially in climate-resilient crops, to enhance nutrition and livelihoods.

4. **Digital leverage:** Use AgriStack, e-NAM, and geospatial tools to widen market access, guide planning, and deliver nutrition-sensitive support.

Global significance and the road ahead

1. **International recognition:** FAO notes India's agrifood transformation as a global contribution and leadership opportunity across the Global South.

2. **SDG timeline and focus shift:** With five years to 2030, momentum must move from sustenance to nutrition, resilience, and opportunity.

3. **Leadership and urgency:** The hunger clock is ticking. The path to ending global hunger runs through India, whose continued leadership is essential.

Question for practice:

Examine the role of India's digitalised PDS in reducing hunger and the remaining nutrition challenges.

J&K LG should follow Council advice on Assembly nominations

Source: The post J&K LG should follow Council advice on Assembly nominations has been created, based on the article "Who decides nominations to UT Assemblies?" published in "The Hindu" on 19th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

Context: The Union Home Ministry told the J&K and Ladakh High Court that **J&K's LG can nominate five MLAs without the Council of Ministers' advice**. This sparked debate on nomination powers in Union Territories and democratic accountability.

Current dispute: LG's nomination power in J&K

1. **Affidavit before the High Court:** The Home Ministry stated that **the LG may act without ministerial advice** when nominating five MLAs. This is the core dispute.

2. **Question of aid and advice:** The issue is whether the **LG must follow the Council of Ministers**. The affidavit says no.

3. **Scope of nominations:** The power concerns a **fixed statutory quota** of nominees. Their addition may affect

House composition.

4. **Implications for governance:** In a tight House, **nominated members can alter stability** and legislative outcomes.

Constitutional and statutory framework

1. **Parliament and States:** Nominated seats exist in India's legislatures. **Anglo-Indian nominations ended in 2020.** The Rajya Sabha has **12 nominated members**, chosen by the President on **Union Cabinet advice**.
2. **Legislative Councils:** In six States with Councils, **nearly one-sixth are nominated** by Governors on **State Cabinet advice**.
3. **Delhi's model:** The 1991 Act provides **70 elected MLAs**. **There are no nominated MLAs in Delhi.**
4. **Puducherry's model:** The 1963 Act provides **30 elected MLAs**, and the Union government **may nominate up to three**.

Judicial interpretation and guidance

1. **Puducherry nomination case (2018):** The Madras High Court **upheld the Union's power** to nominate three MLAs **without UT Cabinet advice**.
2. **Recommendations and their fate:** The High Court suggested **statutory clarity**, but the **Supreme Court set aside these recommendations** on appeal.
3. **Delhi services case (2023):** The Supreme Court described a **"triple chain of command"**: civil servants → ministers → legislature → electorate. It held the **LG is bound by ministerial advice**, except where the Assembly lacks competence. This reasoning **may inform nomination** questions.

Democratic accountability and federal balance

1. **UTs and elected governments:** UTs are not full States. Yet UTs with Assemblies have **elected governments accountable to the people**.
2. **Political alignment issues:** Alignment between the Centre and a UT eases nominations. **Divergence should not derail democratic processes**.
3. **Protecting mandates:** Procedures should **respect popular mandates** and preserve stable governance.

The J&K path forward

1. **Unique trajectory:** J&K was a State until 2019, with greater autonomy.
2. **Judicial and executive signals:** The **Supreme Court upheld** its conversion to a UT. The Union has said **statehood will be restored at the earliest**.
3. **Statutory specifics:** J&K has **90 elected seats** (2019 Act, amended 2023). **Sections 15, 15A, 15B allow up to five nominees** two women, two Kashmiri migrants, and one displaced person from PoK.
4. **Suggested approach:** Given these factors, **LG nominations should be on the Council's advice**. This would **uphold democratic principles** and electoral accountability.

Question for practice:

Discuss whether the J&K Lieutenant Governor can nominate Assembly members without the Council of Ministers' advice.

Deliver empowerment with structural support beyond verdicts for survivors.

Source: The post Deliver empowerment with structural support beyond verdicts for survivors. has been created, based on the article "What true empowerment of women entails" published in "The Hindu" on 19th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1 - Social empowerment

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Context: Amid the trial of former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, a 47-year-old domestic worker resisted intimidation and delays. Her stance exposes a gap. India praises “empowerment” yet neglects unprivileged survivors after verdicts. The article urges **structural support** so legal wins lead to stable, dignified lives. She braved attempts at discrediting and crushing social pressures, yet persisted.

A case that redefines empowerment

1. Survivor’s stand against power: She had no wealth, networks, or media. She faced legal muscle, smear attempts, and social pressure. She **did not withdraw**.

2. From headline to jurisprudence: Her fight is not a headline. It strengthens jurisprudence for women who fear dismissal at police stations. It shows the law can protect the powerless.

3. From silence to service: By asserting her rights, she performed public service. Her victory widens the path for future complainants.

The gap between rhetoric and reality

1. Optics of empowerment: India celebrates women leaders. But empowerment talk often centres on the privileged, not on survival battles.

2. After applause, abandonment: After verdicts, applause fades. Survivors return to hostile environments, face stigma, lose jobs, and carry legal debts.

3. Structural support imperative: Empowerment must be structural—legal, economic, and psychosocial—so success in court does not become defeat in life.

Immediate state obligations

1. Compensation schemes: Create state-funded survivor compensation. Other victims, including terrorism or industrial accidents, receive aid. Similar recognition should cover legal costs and ensure minimum stability. It should secure time to rebuild livelihoods and repay unavoidable debts.

2. Specialised legal aid cells: Legal aid exists but is under-resourced. States should fund survivor litigation cells with advocates, forensic experts, and support officers, on par with public prosecutors. Access must be real, not only on paper.

3. Psychological support as a right: Trauma recovery is a right. Provide long-term counselling, peer networks, and therapy. Fund through the state and CSR consistently.

Pathways to dignity and livelihood

1. Guaranteed employment: Governments, PSUs, and corporates should create direct employment pathways for survivors of abuse-related legal battles.

2. Institutionalise survivor expertise in policing: Train survivors as counsellors in police stations. They can guide women through the first reporting stage.

3. Mentors and POSH adjudicators: Appoint survivors as community legal mentors and as members of Internal Complaints Committees under POSH. Lived experience adds empathy and provides income, institutionalising courage.

Why targeted support matters

- 1. Exceptions require visible backing:** In unreformed systems, these battles are exceptions. Visible support shows the state does not abandon resisters ever.
- 2. Deterrence and confidence effects:** Backing raises the cost of silencing and reassures potential complainants.
- 3. Delivering empowerment, not declarations:** Applause is easy. Real empowerment needs immediate economic support, long-term integration, and legitimised survivor voices in institutions. Concrete recognition reshapes our national idea of empowerment.

Question for practice:

discuss the structural supports proposed for survivors after court victories and why they are necessary for real empowerment.

Jellyfish swarms expose heat-stressed electricity grids worldwide

Source: The post Jellyfish swarms expose heat-stressed electricity grids worldwide has been created, based on the article “Climate havoc: Even jelly fish can trip electricity supply now” published in “Live Mint” on 19th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-infrastructure- energy And Environment

Context: Jellyfish swarms in unusually warm northern European waters **shut two French nuclear plants** by clogging cooling intakes. This headline failure anchors the article's argument: **extreme heat strains generation, water, transmission, wind, and data-centre cooling**, while solar and batteries help only partly.

Jellyfish Shutdowns and Heat-Driven Failures

- 1. French nuclear intake clogging:** Jellyfish blocked reactor intakes, forcing shutdowns. Other units may **cut output** because the **Rhône and Garonne** are too warm for safe cooling.
- 2. Iraq's demand surge in extreme heat:** During **Arba'in**, demand for fans and air-conditioners surged as temperatures topped **40 °C**. Supply to **most of Iraq** collapsed.
- 3. Backup equipment overheating:** At the **Cincinnati Open**, an on-site generator apparently **overheated**, causing a power outage and suspending play.

Thermal Generation Loses Efficiency in Heat

- 1. Design limits surpassed:** Energy assets are built for narrow temperature bands. A warming climate pushes them beyond those limits when demand peaks.
- 2. Forced-outage probabilities:** Heatwaves raise failure risks: **coal +3.2 percentage points, gas +1.3, nuclear +1.0**, according to Sweden-Italy researchers.
- 3. Severe output loss case:** An Iraqi **gas plant lost ~21%** of potential output as ambient temperature rose from **25 °C to 50 °C**.

Cooling Water Scarcity Deepens Risks

- 1. Heatwaves, drought, and coolant shortages:** Thermal plants must **dump waste heat**. Warmer air and water make cooling harder and less available.

2. India's shutdowns and local strain: Since 2014, India has **lost 19 days** of coal power to **water shortages**. Many communities turn to tanker trucks and deeper boreholes.

3. Rising competition with drinking needs: By 2050, power stations may pressure **water supplies** more than **drinking needs**, government forecasts warn.

Renewables and the Grid Under Heat

1. Wind lulls in hot spells: Hot conditions often cut wind speeds. The affected area has **grown 6.3% per decade** since the early 1980s; about **60% of the planet** is now at risk.

2. Regional wind variations: Australia, Siberia, and Europe can see **30%–50%** declines during heatwaves. The northern US, east Africa, the Amazon, and western China sometimes see the opposite.

3. Transmission and transformer stress: Cables and transformers **heat under load** as air temperatures rise. Failures become more likely during **AC-driven demand spikes**.

Data-Centre Demand and the Outlook

1. Cooling loads at data centres: About **one third** of data-centre electricity goes to heating and cooling. A **2022 heatwave** shut server racks at **two London hospitals**, disrupting IT.

2. Relative resilience of solar and batteries: Solar PV and lithium-ion batteries are more heat-resilient than thermal plants and wind, offering **partial relief**.

3. Enduring legacy: Industrial systems rely on a **moderate climate** now disrupted by fossil emissions. The **damage from fossil technology** will **persist** even after cleaner power spreads.

Question for practice:

Examine how jellyfish swarms and heatwaves disrupt electricity generation and grids?

M.S. Swaminathan shows how science can build Viksit Bharat

Source: The post M.S. Swaminathan shows how science can build Viksit Bharat has been created, based on the article “A tribute to M.S. Swaminathan, ‘the man who fed India’” published in “The Hindu” on 20th August 2025

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

Context: India's Viksit Bharat goal needs strong, self-reliant science, especially for the digital economy. A new biography of M.S. Swaminathan prompts reflection on how India achieved food self-sufficiency. The article distils lessons from the Green Revolution for building capability today.

For detailed information on **Swaminathan walked ahead of his time: scientific community** [read this article here](#)

Seeds of collaboration and discovery

1. Collaboration, not isolation: The Green Revolution was powered by science. Breakthroughs came from collaboration, not isolated labs. Inputs raised yields, but heavy grain bent weak stalks. Swaminathan tried radiation-induced mutations for stronger stalks. They failed.

2. The dwarf wheat clue: In 1958, a visiting Japanese scientist pointed to dwarf wheat with short, strong stalks that resisted lodging. The variety had gone to the United States, where a breeder was working on it.

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3. Mexican seeds and early results: That breeder was developing winter wheat, unsuited to India. But Norman Borlaug in Mexico had promising lines. Swaminathan had met him earlier and secured a small seed shipment. The seeds performed well, and he sought to invite Borlaug.

4. Cut red tape and connect globally: IARI cleared the invitation in 1960, but approvals took over two years. Borlaug arrived only in March 1963. The lesson: build global contacts and travel freely; cut bureaucratic control.

From lab to field: enabling trials

1. Trials need timely support: The next step was farmer field trials. The Ministry would not fund them. Lal Bahadur Shastri became Prime Minister in 1964 and named C. Subramaniam Agriculture Minister. This changed the trajectory.

2. Subramaniam's decisive intervention: Subramaniam convened about 20 scientists. Swaminathan said seeds were ready but trials lacked funds. Subramaniam called for the file and released money.

3. Hearing scientists directly: A second lesson follows. On complex technical issues, leaders must hear scientists first-hand, not only through a generalist bureaucracy. Many ministers neither backed nor understood research. Orders to "sort out problems" ignored ground realities.

Science-informed politics and capable ministers

1. Technically literate leadership: China's success reflects ministers with technical training and management records. Subramaniam fit that mould. Achieving Viksit Bharat will require more such ministers.

2. Deciding amid dissent: Scaling up required importing 18,000 tonnes of seed, costing \$5 crore. Finance resisted the foreign exchange. The Planning Commission doubted superior performance. The Left opposed Rockefeller-linked seeds. Shastri visited IARI, was convinced, and approved imports. Indira Gandhi later gave full backing.

3. Decide, back, and monitor: New ideas trigger conflicting expert opinions. Debate is healthy, but decisions must be taken at the top. Once taken, back the effort and ensure independent monitoring with course corrections. The 1968 wheat harvest validated the strategy. PL-480 imports were phased out.

4. Sustainability warnings: Heavy water and fertilizer use caused environmental stress. Swaminathan, outside government, urged corrections for sustainability. The reforms remain overdue.

Future imperatives for Viksit Bharat

1. Climate and institutional performance: Climate change will depress farm productivity. Science will be decisive. Outcomes depend on the strength of research institutions.

2. Funding, rankings, and quality: India once led China in the late 1960s. Today China has eight agricultural research institutions in the world's top 10; India has none in the top 200. India spends only 0.43% of agricultural GDP on R&D. China spends roughly twice that share.

3. Autonomy and access: Institutions need autonomy and good governance to hire and promote on merit. Top scientists must have access to decision makers, as Swaminathan did. Filling these gaps best honours him. The lessons apply across scientific domains, not just agriculture.

Question for practice:

Examine how scientific collaboration and decisive political support enabled the Green Revolution and what lessons this offers for Viksit Bharat.

POSHAN Abhiyaan falters as child stunting persists in India

Source: The post POSHAN Abhiyaan falters as child stunting persists in India has been created, based on the article “The complex web of factors behind India’s persistent stunting crisis” published in “The Hindu” on 20th August 2025

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

Context: POSHAN Abhiyaan (2018) aimed to reduce child stunting by **2 percentage points annually**, targeting “**Mission 25 by 2022.**” Yet, by **June 2025**, stunting is **37%**, barely down from **38.4% (2016)**. The stagnation signals **deeper systemic causes**.

Targets and stalled outcomes

1. **Ambitious goals and timelines:** The path set was from **38.4% (2016)** to **26.4% (2022)**, with an even tighter **25%** goal under Mission 25.
2. **Minimal change in prevalence:** Instead, the rate stands at **37% (June 2025)**—a **~1 percentage point** fall since 2016. The 2022 milestone was **missed**.
3. **Signal of systemic deprivation:** Experts call persistent stunting “**the tip of the iceberg of deprivation,**” pointing to structural deficits beyond program design.

Maternal health and early-life factors

1. **Stunting begins before or at birth:** Nearly **half** of stunted children are already **small at birth**, linking outcomes to maternal health and care.
2. **Adolescent pregnancy and early childbearing:** **Teen pregnancies** raise risks because bodies are **not ready**. Despite laws, **child marriage persists**; **7% of women 15–19** had begun childbearing (**2019–21**).
3. **Caesarean deliveries and breastfeeding initiation:** C-sections rose from **9% (2005–06)** to **22%+ (2021)**. They can **delay colostrum and early breastfeeding** when mothers are unwell or infants are shifted to SNCU/NICU.
4. **Exclusive breastfeeding and class divides:** Only **64%** of infants under six months are **exclusively breastfed**. **Leave entitlements** benefit salaried mothers; informal workers **return early**, limiting feeding frequency.

Diet and nutrition deficits

1. **Carbohydrate-heavy household diets:** Poor households rely on **rice-heavy** meals. Pulses or protein are **infrequent**, as seen in some **Adivasi** communities.
2. **Inadequate child diets in 6–23 months:** Only **~11%** of children under two meet the **minimum acceptable diet** for diversity and meal frequency.
3. **Limited protein and micronutrient access:** Some States added **eggs** to Anganwadi meals, yet **protein and micronutrient** access remains **limited**.
4. **High anaemia among women and children:** Anaemia is **widespread**: **57%** of women **15–49** and **67%** of under-fives (**2019–21**), undermining growth.

Sanitation, infection, and growth

1. **Unsafe water and open defecation:** 19% of households practiced **open defecation (2019–21)**, contaminating groundwater and increasing infections.
2. **Gut health and the malnutrition–infection cycle:** Unsanitary conditions **damage gut microbiota** and absorption. Illness reduces intake and **traps children** in a **malnutrition–infection cycle**.

Education and intergenerational impacts

1. **Maternal education as a protective factor:** Stunting affects **46%** of children of mothers with **no schooling** versus **26%** with **12+ years** of education.
2. **Pathways from schooling to child health:** Educated mothers **access ANC**, follow **better nutrition**, and **delay early pregnancies**, improving outcomes.
3. **Long-term socioeconomic consequences:** Stunting correlates with **poverty**, **lower education**, **weaker cognition**, and **reduced employability**, **perpetuating intergenerational deprivation**.

Question for practice:

What should be the title of above article, in simple sentences, 7 words only. Please don't use ":" this symbols. It should be grammatically correct sentence

India can cut oil imports through electric vehicle adoption

Source: The post India can cut oil imports through electric vehicle adoption has been created, based on the article "**Betting on batteries, not barrels**" published in "**Businessline**" on 20th August

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Infrastructure- Energy

Context: India's transport depends on imported oil, straining the economy. In FY 2024–25, crude imports exceeded \$130 billion. Price spikes and geopolitical shocks hit the current account, weaken the rupee, and raise household costs. The article argues for a decisive shift to EVs powered by solar and storage, enabled by policy.

For detailed information on **Adoption of EVs: Challenges and Solutions** [read this article here](#)

Oil-Driven Vulnerability

1. **Import bill and dependence:** Transport is the largest oil user, pushing import dependence near record highs. Each barrel adds recurring, volatile costs that India cannot control.
2. **Macroeconomic shocks:** Oil price spikes transmit quickly to the current account and exchange rate. They also inflate logistics costs and household budgets, worsening inflation.
3. **Avoidable exposure:** This vulnerability is not inevitable. Replacing barrels with batteries can localise energy, cut imports, and build domestic manufacturing strength.

Economics Have Flipped

1. **Falling technology costs:** Battery packs are about 90% cheaper than in 2010, reaching \$115/kWh in 2024. Solar PV costs fell by a similar 90%, making new solar exceptionally cheap.
2. **Efficiency and per-km costs:** EV drivetrains are three to four times more efficient than engines. With solar firmed by storage for evening charging, per-km costs drop and inflationary pressure eases.

3. Longer battery lifetimes: LFP batteries now deliver around 5,000 cycles versus 1,000 a decade ago. The same rupee of capex buys far more lifetime kilometres.

Dependency, Reframed

1. Capital goods vs consumables: Oil is a consumable dependency bought monthly at volatile prices. Batteries and panels are capital goods, sourceable from multiple suppliers, buildable at home, and recyclable.

2. Import bill impact: Replacing one oil barrel with imported clean hardware costs roughly one-fifth. Even with imports, the overall energy import bill would fall by about 80%.

3. Domestic capacity and recycling: PLI-backed giga-factories, diversified sourcing, and recycling reduce risk. Recyclers can recover over 95% of battery metals at high purity, turning past imports into feedstock.

Why Intervention Is Essential

1. Market limits and coordination: Without clear signals, investment lags, infrastructure is slow, and risk perceptions persist. Policy must accelerate cost declines and coordinate supply chains at scale.

2. Lessons from China, India's gap: China's near-50% EV share in 2024 arose from mandates and planning. India's electric-car share was about 2%, underscoring the need for targets and networks.

3. Bottlenecks and alignment: High first costs, fragmented charging standards, and material risks impede adoption. Strategic intervention must align demand creation with local supply capacity.

Freight First

1. Diesel-heavy segment focus: Long-haul trucks consume a disproportionate share of diesel. Prioritising electrification on the Golden Quadrilateral and port connectors yields outsized savings.

2. Corridor infrastructure and MCS: Deploy Megawatt Charging System depots delivering over 1 MW per charger. Use global standards to avoid vendor lock-in and enable rapid scaling.

3. Solar-plus-storage near highways: Highway-adjacent solar-storage plants tied to distribution grids can supply cheap, inflation-proof power. Paired with EV efficiency, they cut charging and per-km transport costs.

Financing, Security, and an Integrated Roadmap

1. Financing innovation lowers capex: Battery-leasing and battery-as-a-service reduce upfront costs for operators. Public tenders can buy "vehicle-kilometres," extending successful city e-bus PPP models to freight.

2. Supply security and materials: Greater use of LFP and emerging sodium-ion reduces nickel and cobalt dependence. Invest in domestic anodes, cathodes, separators (including synthetic graphite).

3. Close the loop at scale: Recovered materials already reach 95–98% yields at battery-grade purity. Scaling under Extended Producer Responsibility will create a secure domestic resource base.

4. National plan and standards: Adopt a 2047 "no-oil transport" goal with interim ZEV milestones. Build MCS-ready hubs every 100–150 km, enable open-access PPAs for solar-storage, accelerate PLI disbursals, update battery-warranty standards, and coordinate power-market, charging, and logistics reforms. The payoff: cheaper transport, a stronger rupee, cleaner air, and vibrant manufacturing.

Question for practice:

Examine why policy intervention is essential for India's shift to electric vehicles.

Amid geopolitical tensions, India must bolster submarine cable resilience

Source: The post Amid geopolitical tensions, India must bolster submarine cable resilience has been created, based on the article “**Resilience of subsea cables**” published in “**Businessline**” on 20th August

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

Context: Submarine cables underpin global digital flows, carrying 6,400 Tbps. As networks expand and reconfigure, geopolitical tensions and conflict have increased risks to seabed infrastructure. The article assesses India-linked systems, rising faults, strategic chokepoints, and practical, legal, and policy measures to strengthen resilience and recovery.

For detailed information on **India is improving its undersea cable network** [read this article here](#)

Role and Expansion of Subsea Cables

- Digital backbone and growth:** These cables are the backbone of information flows. They are growing, expanding, and being reconfigured to meet demand.
- India's current and planned links:** Eighteen systems connect India today, with four more proposed. IAX provides about 240 Tbps, IEX 210 Tbps, and Google-part-owned Raman offers 400 Tbps toward the Middle East and Europe.
- Next-wave scale and projects:** About 500,000 km of new cables are planned, adding roughly 20,000 Tbps. Meta's Project Waterworth will connect Australia, Brazil, India, South Africa, and the US.

Rising Risks and Repairs

- Fault causes and frequency:** Ageing, ship anchors, fishing trollies, and suspected sabotage drive faults. Fifty-five major faults occurred in the last two years.
- Repair timelines and burden:** Average repair takes about 55 days. One core fibre cut near Taiwan needed nearly 170 days. Repair ships cost \$80–130 million and require specialised crews and tools.
- Conflict-linked incidents:** Seabed warfare has resurfaced with the Ukraine-Russia conflict. Taiwan saw major cuts in early 2023; its Matsu Islands went offline. In June 2025, a Chinese captain of a Togolese-registered vessel was convicted and jailed three years for damaging Taiwan's cables.

Strategic Chokepoints and Redundancy

- Singapore's centrality:** Over 90 carriers connect through 40 systems at Singapore, making it a vulnerable Indo-Pacific node. Seven systems link India to Singapore for regional traffic.
- Diversifying interconnection points:** Carriers and system providers are seeking alternatives to Singapore. The goal is to manage any route failure through substitute interconnection points.
- Leased capacity for continuity:** Most telcos lease from two or more systems. This allows rerouting when faults occur.

Technology and Operations for Resilience

1. **Joint repair capability:** Governments and carriers can jointly support repair facilities and crews. An institutional mechanism would enable rapid recovery after failures.
2. **Monitoring and self-healing:** Unmanned Autonomous Underwater Vehicles and self-healing cables can reduce repair time. Effective incidence reporting helps mobilise resources as soon as faults occur.
3. **Regional hotspots:** An ORF report notes the Red Sea as a damage hotspot, largely tied to Houthi attacks on merchant vessels linked to the Gaza war.

Legal Models and India's Policy Imperatives

1. **Cable protection zones:** Geofenced protection zones deter intrusions. Australia's Schedule 3A to the Telecommunications Act 1997 applies criminal penalties for wilful damage.
2. **Capacity-building initiatives:** Australia's DFAT has set up a Cable Connectivity and Resilience Centre. It offers technical assistance and training across the Indo-Pacific.
3. **Steps for India:** India should adopt similar protections at landing stations. Extending measures to Andaman, Nicobar, and Lakshadweep links will add resilience to national Internet infrastructure

Question for practice:

Discuss risks to submarine cable networks and measures to strengthen resilience in india

Bihar migrants face a silent voter purge

Source: The post Bihar migrants face a silent voter purge has been created, based on the article "India's democracy is failing the migrant citizen" published in "The Hindu" on 21st August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Population and associated issues.

Context: Bihar's Special Intensive Revision has deleted nearly 3.5 million names (4.4% of voters) as "permanently migrated" after hurried house-to-house checks. For circular and split-family migrants, this means losing the vote both at destinations and at home. The article warns of an unfolding, silent disenfranchisement.

For detailed information on **Ensuring voting rights for India's migrant population** [read this article here](#)

A sweeping deletion and its consequences

1. **Scale and label:** Nearly 3.5 million voters were removed during SIR. Many were marked "permanently migrated" only because they were absent when verification teams arrived.
2. **Migration misread:** Locked homes and split-family arrangements are common among the poor. The state is reading these realities as abandonment of electoral rights.
3. **Double exclusion:** Migrants cannot vote where they work and are now struck off at origin. This creates permanent disenfranchisement.
4. **Economic lifeline ignored:** Out-migration sustains Bihar's households and economy. Treating mobility as desertion erases the poor from the democratic record.

A sedentary electoral design in a mobile society

1. **Residence-tethered rules:** Registration relies on proof of address and in-person checks. Migrants fail these tests.
2. **Precarious housing:** Many live in rented rooms, construction sites, footpaths, or slums. Documentation is unavailable or denied.
3. **Politics of exclusion:** Regionalism and sub-nationalism cast migrants as job-stealers or threats. Domicile norms and private-sector quota demands express these sentiments.

4. **Host-state resistance:** Fears of altered outcomes discourage destination registration. Migrants remain stuck: unregistered there, deleted here.

Evidence on turnout and migration

1. **Study findings:** A 2015 TISS study funded by the Election Commission confirmed marginalisation in host-state processes. It identified a triple burden: administrative barriers, digital illiteracy, and social exclusion.
2. **Turnout correlation:** Lower turnout correlates with higher migration in source States. Bihar's SIR widens this turnout gap instead of closing it.
3. **Comparative turnout:** Bihar averaged 53.2% across its last four Assembly polls. Gujarat and Karnataka averaged 66.4% and 70.7%, respectively.
4. **Mobility data:** Visitor location data suggest seven million circular migrants leave Bihar annually. About 4.8 million migrate June–September; 2.7 million return for festivals in October–November. Many returning during an election year will still be unable to vote without cross-state verification.

Portability gaps and dual belonging

1. **Ration portability limits:** Since 2019, only 3.3 lakh Bihar households used One Nation One Ration Card portability by May 2025. Dual residency fears and hurdles restrict transfers.
2. **Parallel with voter IDs:** Migrants keep origin documents due to insecurity in host States. This is not indifference to civic duty.
3. **Demonising mobility:** The message is blunt: if not at home when officials knock, the vote disappears. Dual belonging is penalised.
4. **Border complexities:** Along the 1,751-km India–Nepal open border, “roti-beti” ties shape movement and marriage. New documentation norms and restrictive citizenship readings threaten women's legal and electoral status, adding gendered and xenophobic edges to exclusion.

Steps to prevent a silent purge

1. **Portable voter identity:** India should adopt mobile, flexible voter IDs. The Election Commission must halt blanket deletions and cross-verify with destination rolls.
2. **Grassroots re-enrolment:** Empower panchayats and civil society to run migrant outreach and re-registration drives.
3. **Data-led governance:** Replicate Kerala's migration surveys in high-origin States such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
4. **Avoiding rupture:** Without these measures, India risks the largest silent voter purge since Independence, targeting poor migrants seeking bread, dignity, and work.

Question for practice:

Examine how Bihar's Special Intensive Revision has disenfranchised migrant voters and what remedies are proposed.

India needs strong space laws for growth

Source: The post India needs strong space laws for growth has been created, based on the article “Why India needs a national space law” published in “The Hindu” on 21st August 2025

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

Context: India will celebrate its second National Space Day on August 23. **Missions advance fast, but law lags.** The article argues that **enforceable national space legislation** must match India's exploration and commercial ambitions.

National momentum, legal lag

1. Celebrations and missions: Chandrayaan-3 landed near the lunar south pole. Gaganyaan, future Chandrayaan missions, and the Bharat Antariksh Station are planned. **Ambition is high.**

2. Policy intent versus legal gap: The programme grows, yet the **legal architecture remains weak. Law must guide exploration, innovation, and commerce.**

3. Why this matters now: Rising activity increases risk and responsibility. **Without clear rules, growth slows and disputes rise.**

Global frameworks and their limits

1. Foundational UN principles: The 1967 Outer Space Treaty makes **space the province of all mankind**, bars national appropriation, and places **state responsibility** for all national activities, public or private.

2. Treaties need domestic effect: Companion agreements set rights and liability. **They are not self-executing.** States must implement them at home.

3. Call for national legislation: UNOOSA's Aarti Holla-Maini says **national laws give domestic effect** to UN principles and enable safe, sustainable growth. **India has ratified key treaties but lacks a comprehensive law.**

Why national legislation matters

1. Predictability and clarity: UNOOSA's Rossana Deim-Hoffmann notes that national laws provide **predictability, legal clarity, and stability** for government and industry.

2. Lessons from other countries: Japan, Luxembourg, and the U.S. have frameworks for licensing, liability coverage, and commercial rights.

3. Policy is not enough: Policy signals intent; law creates enforceable structures that investors and operators rely on.

India's incremental strategy

1. Two interdependent aspects: Ranjana Kaul lists two parts: **(i) technical regulations** for commercial operations under Article VI, and **(ii) an overarching "space activities law."**

2. Progress on authorisation: India issued the **Catalogue of Indian Standards for Space Industry**, the **Indian Space Policy** for non-governmental activities, and **IN-SPACE NPG 2023** for authorising space activities.

3. The pending textual framework: The **overarching statute** to embed Outer Space Treaty norms **is still pending.**

Industry needs and operational hurdles

1. Statutory authority for IN-SPACE: Gp.Capt. T.H. Anand Rao (retd.) seeks **formal statutory backing** for IN-SPACE as the central regulator.

2. Unified, clear licensing: He urges **clear licensing rules, timelines, fees, and reasons** for decisions to avoid **multi-ministry delays**, especially for dual-use technologies.

3. Capital and FDI clarity: He calls for **clear FDI rules** (e.g., **100% automatic route for satellite components**) to help startups scale.

4. Liability, insurance, and IP: India is internationally responsible. Companies should carry **third-party insurance**, with **affordable options for startups**. **Strong IP protection** should encourage partnerships and **prevent talent flight**.

Safety, debris, and oversight

1. Accident probes and debris control: Rao proposes **mandatory accident investigations** and **enforceable space-debris laws**.

2. Data and communications alignment: A **unified framework** for space data and satellite communications is needed.

3. Independent appellate review: An **independent appellate body** would reduce conflicts of interest. **Without statute, IN-SPACe decisions face procedural vulnerability**.

Question for practice:

Discuss the need for comprehensive national space legislation in India and the key provisions it should include.

Affection economy returns communities to the center of power

Source: The post Affection economy returns communities to the center of power has been created, based on the article "**The affection economy**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 21st August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Society And Gs paper3-Developmental model across the world

Context: Power in each era rests on a core currency. Today, affection — via communities, kinship, and cohorts — shapes value, alliances, and growth. Digital change and pandemic isolation weakened old bonds and elevated communities, turning care and belonging into assets.

For detailed information on **Why state must cede power to communities** [read this article here](#)

The Affection Economy: Concept and Stakes

- 1. From older currencies to care:** Earlier ages prized land, minerals, demography, and innovation. Now success depends on affection. It guides purpose and determines power.
- 2. Building blocks of cooperation:** Cohorts, kinships, and communities are the units that create value. Curating and nurturing them is a critical capability.
- 3. Attention and data are not enough:** Past decades birthed the attention and data economies. A divided world now needs affection as the binding force.

International Relations and Soft Power

- 1. Like-mindedness as strategy:** Nations seek "like-minded" partners. Shared purpose sustains direction and trust, even amid turbulence from the current American president.
- 2. Networks define leadership:** What separates countries today is the networks they lead. Affection capital builds and protects these networks.
- 3. China, the US, and ceilings:** China is respected but not loved, limiting its rise. The US had no such ceiling until it built one for itself.
- 4. Running down stored capital:** The United States long relied on private actors to cultivate affection. President Donald Trump is rapidly depleting that reserve.

Corporate and State Playbooks

- 1. Competing for affection:** Firms and states now expand through empathetic engagement and care. Both vie to be embraced by communities.

2. **Dubai's curated cohorts:** Dubai designs visas and growth policies to assemble a "golden cohort." The aim is to make people like, fly, buy, and live Dubai.
3. **Other national models:** The UAE is a leading example. Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore also build soft power around communities of interest.
4. **Indian and American cases:** Dhirubhai Ambani's stakeholder capitalism rallied co-owners and now yields a data-equity community, taking broadband to the bottom of the pyramid. Apple scaled global networks that look to California for inspiration.

Roots in Social Capital

1. **Digital flattening and fragile bonds:** Technology replaced neighborhood and workplace ties with diffuse online connections. Individualisation advanced for decades.
2. **Putnam's warning:** In *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam argued that social capital was declining. Civic consciousness fell with it.
3. **Trust as an economic engine:** Francis Fukuyama's *Trust* showed how social capital creates trust, and how trust drives stability and growth.
4. **Dark substitutes for community:** Putnam notes that extreme movements offer imitation communities. Steve Bannon cited *Bowling Alone* as inspiration for a political cure to isolation.

Covid and the New Primacy of Community

1. **Pandemic as accelerant:** Covid deepened isolation and weakened workplaces. It elevated the solo actor.
2. **Two sides of one coin:** The digital nomad and the lone-wolf terrorist show two outcomes of the same shift.
3. **What the future rewards:** Those who understand that communities again matter most will lead. Prosperity flows from care and belonging.
4. **A governing maxim:** "Vasudhaiva kutumbakam" captures this turn: One Earth, One Family, One Future. It is time to return to affection.

Question for practice:

Examine how the affection economy reshapes power through communities and trust, with examples from Dubai, the United States, China, and India?

India secures chip technology through manufacturing and global investments

Source: The post India secures chip technology through manufacturing and global investments has been created, based on the article "India's chip challenge: To build at home, we must invest abroad" published in "Live Mint" on 21st August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Science and technology-Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology.

Context: India's semiconductor ambition is framed as national security, not just industry. The Prime Minister's Independence Day remark triggers a push for sovereignty over core technologies. The article maps early steps, hard realities, and a strategy that combines domestic capacity with bold, outward-looking investment.

For detailed information on **Semiconductor Industry in India- Significance and Challenges** [read this article here](#)

Semiconductors as Sovereignty and Security

1. **Sovereignty through technology control:** Semiconductors underpin power in a fractured world. The goal is to influence and control critical platforms, not merely use them.
2. **Past obstacles and renewed resolve:** Prior fabrication attempts were blocked. India now treats self-sufficiency as a long, arduous, but necessary journey.

3. Policy intent beyond symbolism: The speech signals a doctrine: chips are a new pillar of national security.

Current Domestic Push and Early Steps

1. Institutional architecture and incentives: The India Semiconductor Mission began in 2021. It offers production-linked incentives and 50% capital aid for components and chips.

2. Near-term manufacturing focus: Initial plans target less advanced nodes. Packaging and testing are prioritized where entry barriers are lower.

3. Ecosystem building and talent: The state hosts events to attract foreign firms while developing talent through education and skilling programmes.

4. On-ground projects and coordination: A Tata fabrication plant in Gujarat and a Micron packaging facility in Sanand mark progress. Centre-state alignment is urged for speed.

Scale of the Challenge and Moving Target

1. Length, cost, and limited shortcuts: This climb is immense and expensive. Even relentless execution cannot compress every technological step.

2. China's costly lessons: China invested well over \$100 billion for a decade with full state power. Progress is large, yet behind the cutting edge.

3. Frontier racing ahead: Leaders in Taiwan, South Korea, and the US invest hundreds of billions to push frontiers.

4. The widening-gap paradox: Starting \$100 billion and 10 years behind, five years and \$50 billion later the gap could be \$200 billion and 15 years. Progress may not slow divergence.

Leveraging Private Capital for Strategic Reach

1. Fiscal limits versus risk appetite: Government resources are stretched. India's private markets brim with risk-seeking investors.

2. A new investment vehicle: Proposed is a strategic fund, sovereign-like yet privately capitalized, investing abroad rather than building at home. It channels private wealth now parked in low-yield foreign debt into stakes in leaders.

3. Influence through ownership: By taking meaningful stakes in cutting-edge firms, India gains board seats, voice, and directional influence beyond financial returns.

4. Access and resilience: Such stakes secure access to roadmaps, deepen technology understanding from within, and reduce long-term vulnerability.

Historical Precedent and Global Imperative

1. Past patterns of resource security: Rising powers long secured resources and routes beyond their borders. East Asian successes often acquired assets and know-how abroad.

2. Technology as the critical resource: In the twenty-first century, the most vital resource is technology, with semiconductors at the forefront.

3. Dual pathway to self-sufficiency: True security needs concrete at home and capital abroad. India must build domestically while investing boldly in the world's labs and boardrooms.

Question for practice:

Examine how leveraging private Indian capital abroad complements domestic efforts to achieve semiconductor self-sufficiency.

Teaching a lesson cannot justify custodial violence

Source: The post Teaching a lesson cannot justify custodial violence has been created, based on the article “Justice is not about ‘teaching someone a lesson’” published in “The Hindu” on 22nd August 2025

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

Context: A Chhattisgarh High Court ruling on a custodial death said police intended “to teach a lesson.” A Dalit man died hours after a clean medical check. It legitimises brutality and weakens constitutional policing.

For detailed information **Custodial Violence in India** [read this article here](#)

The Case and Judicial Finding

- 1. Troubling facts and timeline:** A Dalit man, arrested for alleged public misbehaviour, was medically cleared without injuries and died in custody within hours. The postmortem recorded 26 wounds.
- 2. Trial conviction and charges:** The trial court convicted four officers of murder, recognising a fatal assault shown by the postmortem and custody.
- 3. High Court alteration of offence:** The High Court reduced the offence to culpable homicide, finding no intent to kill, only knowledge the assault could cause death.
- 4. The “teach a lesson” remark:** By noting an intent “to teach a lesson,” the court cast violence as discipline. In a judgment, such phrasing shapes how misconduct is viewed.

Deterrence Logic and its Dangers

- 1. Not a constitutional principle:** “Teaching a lesson” is not a legal standard. It reflects vigilante logic where fear replaces rights and procedures.
- 2. Normalising torture:** Treating violence as corrective zeal normalises custodial torture. Brutality appears as discipline rather than illegality.
- 3. Emboldening and steering policy:** This framing invites officers to act as enforcer and judge. Judicial language then shapes policy, making future misconduct more likely.

Caste, Identity, and the SC/ST Act

- 1. Erased victim identity:** The deterrence narrative obscures the victim’s Scheduled Caste identity. In rural India, upper-caste officers beating a Dalit detainee signals caste-coded enforcement.

2. **Acquittal under the Act:** The trial court acquitted the prime accused under the SC/ST Act, and the High Court did not interfere, limiting accountability for caste-based harm.

3. **Demand for explicit proof:** Requiring explicit proof of caste motive ignores structural power. Without slurs or declarations, the Act is rarely triggered.

4. **Consequence of a narrow lens:** This narrow reading denies justice in cases the law sought to address, weakening the statute's protection.

Precedents Versus Persistent Abuse

1. **Supreme Court safeguards:** Judgments like D.K. Basu, Ashok K. Johri, State of U.P., and Munshi Singh Gautam require transparency, safeguards, and strict limits on police force.

2. **Disproportionate victims:** Custodial deaths persist at alarming levels, disproportionately affecting Dalits, Adivasis, and the poor, despite clear judicial guidance.

3. **Weak enforcement and conflicted inquiries:** Compliance is sporadic, and inquiries are often led by implicated institutions. This undermines accountability and enables repeat violations.

Pathways for Judicial Integrity and Reform

1. **Reject deterrent framing and reassert policing limits:** Courts must reject deterrent justifications and reaffirm police are constitutional functionaries, not disciplinarians. Using force for public nuisance erodes dignity, proportionality, and due process.

2. **Apply law and strengthen oversight:** The SC/ST Act should be robustly applied wherever social power is weaponised. Independent accountability and enforceable safeguards are essential.

3. **Guard against moral shelter:** Courts must not offer moral cover to extra-legal instincts. A Constitution rooted in dignity and equality cannot coexist with "lessons" written in bruises.

Question for practise:

Discuss how framing custodial violence as "teaching a lesson" undermines constitutional policing and accountability in the Chhattisgarh case.

Bihar voter deletions disenfranchise young women amid migration ambiguity

Source: The post Bihar voter deletions disenfranchise young women amid migration ambiguity has been created, based on the article "**How women migrant electors are disenfranchised in the Bihar SIR process**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 22nd August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Population and associated issues.

Context: Bihar's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) produced a draft roll on August 1, 2025. Supreme Court-mandated, AC-wise lists enabled granular analysis. Patterns indicate migration-linked removals concentrated among young women, raising concerns of **systemic bias** and **disenfranchisement**.

For detailed information on **Ensuring voting rights for India's migrant population** [read this article here](#)

Scale and Patterns of Deletions

1. **Overall magnitude and timeline:** The EC used the **June 24, 2025 base roll** to compile deletions for the draft published on **August 1, 2025**.
2. **Reasons for removal:** Over **55%** were **permanently shifted or untraceable**. About **34%** were **deceased**. Only **10.8%** were **multiple enrolments**.
3. **Granular constituency insights:** AC-wise lists allowed *The Hindu's* Data Point analysis. In the **top nine ACs**, **4.73 lakh** names were deleted, and **56%** were **women**.
4. **Female-specific patterns:** Of **2.68 lakh** deleted women in these ACs, **46%** were permanently shifted, **27%** untraceable, **20%** deceased, and **6%** multiple enrolments. Of **1.23 lakh** women removed as permanently shifted, **66%** were **18–39**.

Gendered Migration and Built-in Bias

1. **Marriage as the driver:** Census data show **marriage** dominates female migration; in Bihar, it accounts for **85.7%** of female migrants.
2. **Signal from age-wise deletions:** Concentration among women **18–39** classified as permanently shifted indicates exclusion of **married women en masse**.
3. **Design concerns in SIR 2025:** The pattern reflects an **exclusionary migrant bias** and a **gender bias** against young married women.
4. **Ambiguity of “ordinary residence”:** Eligibility requires being “**ordinarily resident**,” but statutes **do not** define it, enabling **arbitrary deletions**.

Process Design and Legal Gaps

1. **Extra-legal procedural hurdle:** SIR required existing electors to submit an **enumeration form within 30 days**. This added an **extra-legal** filter that burdens migrants, especially women.
2. **Narrow framing of migration:** The **June 24 SIR order** mentions education and livelihood but **omits marriage**, the principal female migration reason.
3. **Multiple entries vs migration:** **Multiple-enrolment deletions are far fewer** than **migration-related deletions**, weakening the rationale for mass removals.

Risks of Disenfranchisement

1. **Deletion without re-enrolment:** Removing “permanently shifted” electors **without ensuring re-enrolment** at current residence leads to **disenfranchisement**.
2. **Unsettled legal guidance:** The **EC Manual (March 2023)** notes **Section 20(7)** empowers EROs to decide ordinary residence, yet **no rules exist**.
3. **Bihar’s migration reality:** Launching SIR in a high out-migration State without clarifying migrant status produced mass exclusion. A focus on “**foreign illegal migrants**” diverted attention.

Path Forward and Immediate Measures

1. **Define principles and act now:** Clarifying “ordinary residence,” including **marriage-driven migration**, will take time. Immediate safeguards are essential.
2. **Current response is inadequate:** By **August 21**, only **70,895** claims/objections and **2.28 lakh** Form 6 applications were filed. Roughly **36 lakh** marked as shifted or untraceable may **remain excluded**.
3. **Targeted corrective steps:** **Extend deadlines by 30 days**, **re-verify** shifted and untraceable cases, **mandate re-enrolment** in current constituencies, and **let women choose** natal or marital household rolls.

Question for practice:

Examine how Bihar’s SIR 2025 deletions, driven by migration and unclear “ordinary residence,” disproportionately excluded young married women and risked disenfranchisement?

India must overhaul vocational education for broad-based job growth

Source: The post India must overhaul vocational education for broad-based job growth has been created, based on the article “**The skills check**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 22nd August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education.

Context: With a **volatile external sector**, the Prime Minister announced reforms on **August 15**. Beyond **GST recalibration**, the article urges overhauling **vocational education and training (VET)** to raise productivity and employability. A **rote-heavy system** cannot supply a future-ready workforce.

Scale and outcomes of India’s VET

1. **Low formal training and seat utilisation:** Only **4%** of India’s workforce is formally trained. The system has **14,000+ ITIs** and **25 lakh** seats, but enrolment was **12 lakh in 2022**—just **48% utilisation**.
2. **Modest employment after training:** In **2018**, only **63%** of ITI graduates were employed. VET systems in **Germany, Singapore, and Canada** achieve **80–90%**.
3. **Demand-led growth needs skills:** GST may lift demand, but **job-rich growth** needs skills; the weak VET pipeline restrains productivity and formal jobs.

Structural reasons for weak performance

1. **Late integration in schooling:** Germany integrates VET at **upper-secondary** via a **dual system** with paid apprenticeships. India adds VET **after high school**, reducing hands-on time and early orientation.
2. **No academic progression or credit transfer:** Singapore provides **clear pathways** from technical education and polytechnics to university. India lacks **formal progression** and **credit transfer**, deterring students who want academic options open.
3. **Quality and perception deficits:** Many courses are **outdated**; **over one-third** instructor posts are vacant due to limited **NSTI** capacity. **Irregular grading** and absent feedback weaken quality.
4. **Thin employer engagement and PPP gaps:** Employer participation is **limited**; ITIs depend on government funds; **MSMEs** have capacity limits; **Sector Skill Councils** lack state presence.

International practices that work

1. **Germany's dual system:** Early embedding with **paid apprenticeships** improves employability and smooths school-to-work transitions.
2. **Singapore's quality and lifelong upskilling:** **Industry-led design**, strong instructors, and routine audits ensure relevance. **SkillsFuture** supports continuous learning.
3. **Shared financing and co-design:** Governments fund institutions; employers pay apprenticeships, share costs, and **co-design curricula**. This aligns training with labour demand.

Reform priorities for India

1. **Integrate VET early and create pathways:** Implement **NEP 2020** school integration. **Fast-track the National Credit Framework** with recognised certifications and progression routes.
2. **Raise training quality and capacity:** Align courses with **local demand** via market assessments. **Expand NSTIs**, hire instructors, and strengthen **ITI grading** with trainee feedback.
3. **Build strong partnerships with industry:** Scale the Private Training Partner model. Engage MSMEs and use CSR funding.

Financing and current schemes—what's missing

1. **Invest more and link funding to performance:** India spends ~3% on VET vs 10–13% in **Germany, Singapore, Canada**. Improve viability via lower per-student costs, **revenue autonomy**, and **performance-linked funding**.
2. **Scheme design focused on jobs, not skills:** **ELI Part A** gives up to ₹15,000 to first-time **EPFO**-registered workers. **ELI Part B** pays employers ₹3,000/month per new hire. Both promote **formalisation** but **lack skilling** components.
3. **Internships and upgrades without clear outcomes:** The **PM Internship Scheme** offers **one-year placements** but no route to permanent jobs. The **ITI Upgradation Initiative** modernises 1,000 ITIs with industry partners, not necessarily training quality. These measures **tinker at the margins**; a **system overhaul** is essential for VET to become a reliable path to jobs and a **Viksit Bharat**.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons for low VET uptake and employment in India and the reforms proposed to improve outcomes.

Climate adaptation creates new markets and growth opportunities

Source: The post Climate adaptation creates new markets and growth opportunities has been created, based on the article “**Climate resilience spending can generate a new wave of startups**” published in “**Live Mint**” on 22nd August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: **GS Paper3-** Environment And Growth, development and employment.

Context: Adaptation is not only a defensive cost. It is a growth market. **Public spending on resilience is creating private demand** for climate-ready goods, services, and technologies, opening new commercial avenues.

Reframing Adaptation as Opportunity

1. From cost to market: Government resilience projects generate contracts. They create **markets for climate-ready infrastructure, materials, and services**. Adaptation becomes a pipeline of commercial activity.

2. Public capital to private delivery: Public institutions set requirements, allocate funds, and procure private solutions. **Capital flows mainly from public sources to private executors** as resilience enters programme design.

3. Current finance mix and gap: Global adaptation finance was **\$63 billion in 2021-22 (<5% of climate finance)**. Mitigation dominates. Developing countries need **~\$212 billion annually by 2030**, revealing a large gap.

India's Market Size and Demand Signals

1. Investment needs and sectors: India's business-ready adaptation market could be **\$24 billion by 2030**. Annual needs for resilient infrastructure, agriculture, water, and health **may exceed \$100 billion**. CPI highlights **water management, coastal protection, and disaster risk reduction** as tangible opportunities. **Agriculture, technology, finance, and insurance** stand to gain.

2. Urban infrastructure surge: The World Bank projects **\$2.4 trillion** in urban climate infrastructure by 2050. This includes **flood defences, water supply, and drainage networks**.

3. Early corporate participation: **VA Tech Wabag, Jain Irrigation, and Larsen & Toubro** are executing projects in **AMRUT, Smart Cities, and the National Water Mission**, where resilience is embedded in procurement.

Innovation Priorities and Startup Pathways

1. Frontier agriculture and materials: Early bets and long horizons are needed. Priorities include **drought-tolerant seeds, bio-stimulants, and resilient construction** such as **cool roofs, permeable paving, and flood-resistant coatings**.

2. Water and climate intelligence tools: Opportunities include **rainwater harvesting, decentralised wastewater treatment, smart metering**, distributed water systems, and **climate-risk intelligence** using remote sensing, forecasting, and early warnings.

3. Health systems for climate emergencies: Health infrastructure must handle **heatwaves, floods, and other climate-linked crises**. **Resilience-first startups** can fill gaps where market-ready solutions are scarce.

Mobilising Capital and Policy Actions

1. Present channels and constraints: Most finance is public or donor-led. Private capital is constrained by **limited risk data, thin bankable pipelines, and low regulatory clarity**.

2. Unlocking private finance: India should catalyse an ecosystem via **blended finance, procurement incentives, and resilience-focused R&D missions** to de-risk and crowd in investors.

3. Scale and economic rationale: The RBI estimates **₹85.6 trillion by 2030 (~2.5% of GDP)** for mitigation and adaptation. This protects operations, manages risks, and opens new avenues.

Strategic Outlook

1. Demand, reforms, and advantage: Without higher spending, **risks rise and growth is constrained**. **Public demand will stay strong**, while reforms and financial innovation open markets. Adaptation now **resembles a**

necessity-anchored growth industry. With **heatwaves, floods, and water stress** accelerating, **early movers** that build local markets, invest in R&D, and nurture entrepreneurship will gain **economic and ecological advantages** beyond disaster management.

Question for practice:

Examine how public spending on climate adaptation creates private market opportunities in India

Delhi needs sterilisation and vaccination not cruel dog shelters

Source: The post Delhi needs sterilisation and vaccination not cruel dog shelters has been created, based on the article **"A Court order that was barking up the wrong tree"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 23rd August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

Context: On August 11, 2025, the Supreme Court ordered Delhi's street dogs confined; on August 22, 2025, it stayed that order. The initial decree ignored science, law, and compassion, and distracted from governance failures. With the final hearing pending, **humane, evidence-based options** require focus.

For detailed information on **Supreme Court order on street dogs raises legal concerns** [read this article here](#)

What the Court Ordered and Why It Matters

- 1. A flawed decree and reversal:** The order mandated citywide incarceration of street dogs. **Its stay on August 22, 2025** exposed deep policy and legal flaws.
- 2. A sentence without compassion:** **Lakhs of sentient beings** would face misery and likely death. The directive sidelined constitutional compassion and societal duty.
- 3. A diversion from real crises:** The dog focus masked governance failures: **alleged voter theft**, crumbling infrastructure, monsoon flooding, corruption, and inflation. **MCD's statutory lapses** persisted.
- 4. Costly and impractical fantasy:** Mass shelters would cost **thousands of crores** and lack capacity. The plan promised chaos, not safety, for people or animals.

Why Mass Sheltering Fails

- 1. Public health catastrophe:** Overcrowded shelters fuel **aggression, injuries, and disease**. Outbreaks would create hazardous **carcass-disposal** burdens for poorly protected staff.
- 2. Behavioural harm is predictable:** Research, including **Leslie Irvine** and **David Tuber (1999)**, shows confinement causes severe distress and dangerous behaviour. Welfare declines sharply.
- 3. Zoonotic risk magnifier:** Shelters can become epicentres for **rabies and leptospirosis**, endangering dogs and workers. Public health risk rises, not falls.
- 4. Imagined outcomes in Delhi:** Mixing territorial dogs would trigger **fights and casualties**. Control would collapse as stress and injuries escalate quickly.

Ecological and Policy Contradictions

- 1. The vacuum effect:** Mass removal creates an **ecological vacuum**. Dogs from **Haryana and Uttar Pradesh** would migrate to food sources. Border policing is absurd.
- 2. Losing urban scavengers:** Removing dogs cuts **scavenging**. **Rodent and monkey** numbers could surge, bringing new public health problems.

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3. Against WHO and NAPRE guidance: WHO and India's NAPRE endorse **mass sterilisation and vaccination** for control. The order contradicted these scientific guidelines.

4. Social misrepresentation: It is not **elite versus poor**. Research shows street dogs '**sympiosis with marginalised residents**, including homeless people who rely on them.

Evidence and Law Favour ABC

1. Proven programme, poor execution: ABC has worked, including in Jaipur. A **2010 Jodhpur study** showed stable declines and high vaccination. **MCD missed targets and budgets**.

2. Legal inconsistency corrected: The **Pardiwala** order clashed with **Maheshwari (2024)** upholding **Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023**. The **August 22, 2025** modification restored coherence.

3. A constitutional duty of compassion: **Article 51A(g)** mandates compassion for living creatures. **State-sanctioned cruelty** violates India's moral and legal framework.

4. Accountability, not scapegoats: The core problem is **MCD dereliction**, not dogs. Statutory duties and humane protocols remain **unimplemented**.

A Targeted, Humane Way Forward

1. Focused risk management: Address bites with **evidence**. Capture and observe specific dogs after **clear, unprovoked attacks**. Avoid indiscriminate round-ups.

2. Implement proven protocols: Scale **sterilisation and vaccination**. Establish **uniform, humane protocols** aligned with **WHO/NAPRE** for population and rabies control.

3. Re-centre governance: Fix **waste, drainage, and urban services** shaping human-animal interactions. **Hold MCD accountable** for execution.

4. Choose science and compassion: Reject **dog prisons**. A safer city comes from **ABC**, vaccination, and responsible governance—**science with compassion**.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the scientific, ecological, and legal flaws in the Supreme Court's initial order to shelter Delhi's street dogs.

India's courts must adopt artificial intelligence responsibly and transparently

Source: The post India's courts must adopt artificial intelligence responsibly and transparently has been created, based on the article "**Set the guardrails for AI use in courtrooms**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 23rd August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: **GS Paper2-** Justice And **GS paper 3-**Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Context: July this year, the Kerala High Court issued the country's **first policy** on AI use in district courts. It seeks **speed and efficiency** in a system with **five crore pending cases**, but stresses safeguards. The article maps **risks, gaps, and governance** for responsible adoption.

For detailed information on **How AI Can Improve India's Justice System** [read this article here](#)

Early Policy and Promised Benefits

1. First-of-its-kind guidance: Kerala's policy directly regulates AI in judicial processes. It is **timely** and sets **strict safeguards**. It shows openness to innovation with caution.

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2. Efficiency gains for a burdened system: AI can assist translation, transcription, and defect detection in filings. These tools promise **faster routine work** in overburdened courts.

3. Experimental deployments underway: Some tools are used on a **non-commercial test basis** for oral arguments and depositions. Benefits must be weighed against risk and capacity limits.

Practical Risks in Seemingly Simple Tasks

1. Translation and transcription errors: A judge saw “leave granted” rendered as **chhutti sweekaar**. In **Noel Anthony Clarke v. Guardian News & Media Ltd. (2025) EWHC 550 (KB)**, an AI tool repeatedly transcribed “Noel” as “no”. **OpenAI’s Whisper** sometimes **hallucinates** phrases, especially with long pauses.

2. Research and citation pitfalls: Search bias can **invisibilise precedents** by nudging toward user-patterned results. A **Journal of Empirical Legal Studies** study shows legal LLMs can **make up case law** and **cite incorrect sources**.

3. Risks to adjudication quality: Over-reliance on rule-based outputs can **sideline human judgment**, context, and careful use of precedent in decisions.

Pilots, Dependencies, and Risk Management Gaps

1. Undefined guardrails for pilots: Pilots often lack **time-frames**, **success parameters**, and **data access**, **storage**, and **use rules** for **non-public**, **sensitive**, or **personal data**.

2. Dependencies and infrastructure needs: “Test” access may create **dependencies** without a clear path to sustainable adoption. AI needs **reliable Internet** and **adequate hardware**.

3. Tender patterns and oversight reality: Tenders show **incomplete risk frameworks**. **Manual vetting** by retired judges, advocates, and translators exists, yet AI learns from changing data and can err.

4. Hallucinations are inherent: Scholars note **hallucinations are a feature**, not a bug. **Human oversight** is essential in **high-risk** settings.

Governance Measures for Responsible Adoption

1. Build critical AI literacy: Judges, staff, and lawyers need **capacity building** to use tools and understand **limitations**. Judicial academies and bar associations can partner with **AI governance experts**.

2. Transparent courtroom use: Guidelines should cover **personal use** for research and writing. **Litigants must be informed** if AI is used and may **opt out** of pilots or deployments where safeguards worry them.

3. Procure with standards: Adopt **standardised procurement** to test **reliability** and **fitness**. **Pre-procurement** should confirm the problem and whether AI is the **best solution**. Assess **explainability**, **data management**, and **risk mitigation**.

4. Monitor vendor performance: Frameworks should track **compliance** and **outcomes** beyond routine judicial expertise.

Institutional Scaffolding and Purpose

1. Technology offices under eCourts: The **eCourts Phase III Vision Document** calls for **technology offices** to assess, select, and oversee complex digital solutions and infrastructure.

2. Specialist support for courts: Dedicated specialists can close expertise gaps and guide **comprehensive planning** for AI adoption.

3. Keep the justice purpose central: AI must **serve the ends of justice**. **Efficiency** should not eclipse **nuanced reasoning** and **human decision-making**.

4. Mind the paper-based reality: Most procedures remain **paper-based**. Any shift to advanced AI must **not debilitate** an imperfect system.

Question for practice:

Examine the opportunities and risks of adopting artificial intelligence in the Indian judicial system as highlighted in the article.

Citizen dialogue rebuilds trust and strengthens India's plural coexistence

Source: The post Citizen dialogue rebuilds trust and strengthens India's plural coexistence has been created, based on the article "**The necessity of bridges**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 23rd August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1-Indian society

Context: Four years ago, amid rising communal polarisation, five friends began a citizen dialogue with RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. Seeing Muslim alienation and fearing hardened divisions, they tested whether frank engagement with the BJP's ideological mentor could reduce mistrust and prompt corrective action.

Origins and Intent

- 1. Personal initiative, not representation:** They met Bhagwat as concerned citizens, not Muslim delegates, because targeted policies and rhetoric had left many feeling cornered.
- 2. Why engage the RSS:** Despite claims of BJP-RSS separation, the RSS remains the ideological mother body with policy influence.
- 3. Early reactions and outreach:** The step drew cautious support and criticism. They then met clerics, priests, activists, and educators; lack of conversation was deepening mistrust.

Nature of Dialogue

- 1. A fraught history:** RSS literature has included anti-Muslim and anti-Christian rhetoric, casting minorities as outsiders to a Hindu Rashtra vision.
- 2. Direct but honest exchanges:** Bhagwat expressed Hindu anxieties; the group aired Muslim concerns.
- 3. Signals from Bhagwat:** He pledged to reduce differences and has at times urged unity, less hate, and tolerance.

Practical Recommendations

- 1. Sustained dialogue platforms:** Create regular forums, local and national, for scholars, clerics, leaders, and activists to address misconceptions quickly.
- 2. Joint social and cultural action:** Collaborate on relief, literacy, and health drives. Update madrasa syllabi with shared histories; hold joint festivals and celebrate major occasions together.
- 3. Sensitivities and public order:** Limit loudspeakers for daily azans; run visible campaigns against cow slaughter; manage Friday prayers to avoid road blockages; promote civic responsibility among youth; avoid derogatory labels like "kafir" and "jihadis."

4. **Engagement with laws and policy:** Consider a Uniform Civil Code if the government publishes a draft and seeks genuine feedback. Imposition without consultation, as with the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, invites resistance.

Reform and Reciprocity

1. **Comparative Muslim reforms.** Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Algeria have adapted family, education, and public laws.

2. **Scope for Indian Muslim reform:** Indian Muslims can pursue faith-consistent reforms that suit a plural nation.

3. **Need for reciprocity:** Such reforms will fail without reciprocal respect from Hindus and the state. Trust cannot be one-sided.

State, Trust, and the Path Ahead

1. **Eroding confidence in institutions:** Many minorities distrust executive and judiciary due to discriminatory laws, selective justice, and majoritarian rhetoric. Policing often appears partial, seen in Kanwar festival courtesies like flowers, feet-touching, and aerial flower showers.

2. **Equal application of law:** Confidence-building needs depolarised politics, equal enforcement, and action against hate speech—shown in deeds, not words.

3. **A choice before India:** India's strength is complex coexistence. The balance is strained; the choice is division or the harder path of conversation, reform, and mutual respect.

4. **Scaling the initiative:** The dialogue may be a drop in the ocean. More citizens and institutions must sustain engagement. Trust takes time, but small bridges matter.

Question for practice:

Discuss how sustained dialogue between communities, joint social action, and equal enforcement of laws can rebuild communal trust in India.

Make every Made in India pill safe

Source: The post Make every Made in India pill safe has been created, based on the article “Reclaiming our leadership in safe drugs” published in “Financial Express” on 23rd August 2025

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

Context: India's pharma industry is globally vital and domestically foundational. Recent incidents and data exposing substandard and falsified medicines have triggered intense scrutiny. The article warns that credibility, public health, and hard-won access gains are at risk unless action escalates rapidly across government, industry, and society.

For detailed information on **States and the Danger of Poorly Manufactured Drugs** [read this article here](#)

India's Pharma Strength and Pride

1. **Global supply and scale:** India supplies 60% of global vaccines, 40% of US generics, and 25% of UK medicines. Exports crossed \$25 billion in 2023, with over 650 FDA-approved facilities and buyers in more than 200 countries.

2. **Domestic access and affordability:** Affordable, quality medicines support initiatives like Jan Aushadhi and Ayushman Bharat, benefiting vast populations within India.

3. **Trust at risk:** Despite global trust, uneven quality now endangers India's reputation as the "pharmacy of the world."

The SF Medicines Crisis

1. **Prevalence and estimates:** A 2023 CRISIL-ASPA study estimates about 20% of medicines sold in India may be counterfeit or substandard. WHO warns one in ten medical products in low- and middle-income countries is SF.

2. **Human tragedies:** Ineffective chemotherapy, contaminated syrups, and misdiagnoses translate statistics into suffering for patients and families.

3. **International alarms:** Deaths linked to Indian-made cough syrups in Gambia, Uzbekistan, and Cameroon drew global headlines and concern.

Public Health Consequences

1. **Resistance and treatment failure:** SF drugs fuel antimicrobial resistance and make routine infections harder to treat.

2. **Chronic disease burden:** They compromise treatment for diabetes, cancer, and heart conditions, worsening illness and outcomes.

3. **Erosion of trust:** They corrode confidence in healthcare systems, which is hard to rebuild once lost.

Government Action So Far

1. **Enforcement drives:** Recent raids shut illegal units and seized thousands of fake drug consignments across states.

2. **Surveillance upgrades:** The Union health ministry is rolling out mandatory QR codes on top-selling medicines, upgrading Central Drugs Testing Laboratories, and promoting "Track and Trace."

3. **First steps, not finish line:** Given the scale, these actions are necessary but insufficient.

Gaps, Enforcement, and Accountability

1. **Awareness and access gaps:** Most consumers do not know how to verify medicines. Rural areas face unlicensed pharmacies; urban markets suffer supply-chain opacity and uneven enforcement.

2. **Criminality and penalties:** Counterfeiting is a deadly criminal act. Laws must be strengthened to treat it as endangering life, with swift, exemplary punishment.

3. **Coordination and gatekeeping:** Central and state authorities need tighter coordination and resources. Retailers and pharmacists must verify sources and reject untraceable stock.

Industry Measures and National Call

1. **Technology and assurance:** Companies are deploying tamper-evident packaging, advanced serialisation, and real-time tracking to block counterfeits.

2. **Quality culture and collaboration:** Manufacturers conduct rigorous audits and quality checks, and work with regulators to flag irregularities; sustained collaboration with law enforcement is essential.

3. High stakes and urgency: Counterfeits threaten Ayushman Bharat's universal coverage goals and India's global standing. The article urges an all-of-government, industry, and society push—acting now so every “Made in India” pill guarantees safety, efficacy, and integrity.

Question for practise:

Examine the challenges posed by substandard and falsified medicines in India and evaluate how government action, industry measures, and public awareness are addressing the crisis.

India debates fairness in removing detained ministers

Source: The post India debates fairness in removing detained ministers has been created, based on the article “The new Constitution Bill, the need for a balancing act” published in “The Hindu” on 25th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Context: On August 20, 2025, a Bill was introduced. It orders exit after 30 days in custody. It applies to offences punishable with five years or more. It covers Ministers, Chief Ministers, and the Prime Minister. It promises cleaner politics but raises constitutional concerns. Public trust has suffered when jailed leaders retain office.

For detailed information on **Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill – Provisions & Criticisms** [read this article here](#)

Constitutional foundations and intent

- 1. Stated purpose and trigger:** The Bill targets leaders in custody who still hold office. It treats continued detention as a ground for exit. It aims to rebuild trust in governance.
- 2. Articles and the pleasure doctrine:** The plan rests on Articles 75, 164, and 239AA. These place ministers at the President's or Governor's pleasure. Courts have read this power within constitutional morality. It proposes Clause 5A after Article 75(5), Clause 4A after Article 164(4), and Clause 5A after Article 239AA(5).
- 3. Ethical aspiration:** The proposal signals a push for integrity. It tries to limit executive tenure when custody follows serious allegations. It answers public demands for moral rectitude.

Judicial guidance and moral expectations

- 1. Constitutional morality in governance:** In S.R. Bommai, the Court stressed integrity and accountability. Democratic institutions must be protected by constitutional morality. The Bill cites that spirit.
- 2. Appointments and criminality:** In Manoj Narula, the Court warned against assigning executive power to those facing grave cases. It did not order automatic removal. But it tied ministerial choice to ethics.
- 3. Legislative codification of signals:** The proposal turns judicial signals into rules. It seeks to codify long standing moral expectations.

Due process, statutory alignment, and consistency

- 1. Presumption of innocence:** Removal on arrest conflicts with the presumption of innocence. Article 21 protects liberty and fair process. Action without conviction or even charges risks that core value.
- 2. RPA framework and Lily Thomas:** Section 8(3) of the Representation of the People Act triggers disqualification only on conviction. In Lily Thomas, the Court made it immediate. It did not link it to arrest or detention.
- 3. Unequal standards:** Lawmakers lose seats only after conviction. Ministers would exit on mere detention. A convicted legislator could still be appointed until disqualified, but a detained minister must go.

Political incentives and operational pitfalls

- 1. Advice versus automatic removal:** New clauses under Articles 75, 164, and 239AA mix advice with automatic exit. A Prime Minister or Chief Minister may advise removal. If advice is withheld, automatic removal starts after 30 days. Shielding allies or targeting rivals becomes easier.
- 2. Revolving door instability:** Reappointment is allowed after release. Leaders could resign, get bail, and return. These cycles may unsettle governance without real ethical gain. A Chief Minister could resign after 31 days, get bail, and be reinstated.

3. Chilling effects on talent and governance: Harsher rules for ministers than legislators may deter talent. Fear of exit on unproven claims may weaken continuity.

A calibrated, fair reform path

- 1. Scale of criminalisation:** A 2024 ADR and NEW study found 46% of MPs had declared criminal cases. The share was 43% in 2019 and 30% in 2009. The rise is sharp and steady.
- 2. Better legal triggers:** Tie exit to judicial milestones, such as framing of charges by a competent court. That filter screens out flimsy or politically driven arrests. Accountability remains intact.
- 3. Institutional safeguards:** Create an independent review body to verify conditions. Use interim suspension of ministerial functions during trials. Limit the rule to offences of moral turpitude and corruption.
- 4. Constitutional balance and next steps:** Citizens want clean politics, but fairness matters. The Bill now sits with the JPC. It needs due process and checks. Without them, accountability can become exclusion. Due process matters.

Question for practice:

Examine the constitutional, political, and ethical challenges posed by the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill, 2025.

First 1,000 days shape lifelong child growth

Source: The post First 1,000 days shape lifelong child growth has been created, based on the article “Nourish to flourish, the nutrition and cognition link” published in “The Hindu” on 25th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Issue relating to poverty and hunger

Context: The summary covers all major ideas and keeps a clear flow. The first 1,000 days are the non-repeatable window for growth. The article explains the science, links nutrition with cognition, describes ICDS initiatives, and sets priorities to secure children’s and women’s futures amid automation.

For detailed information on **The frontliners of the first 1,000-day window of life – on addressing child and maternal health** [read this article here](#)

Why the first 1,000 days matter

- 1. A once-in-a-lifetime window:** With a 2 p.m. flight, you must leave by 12 p.m.; the 12–1 p.m. hour is your **critical window**. Likewise, a child’s first 1,000 days are the **critical window** for lifelong development.
- 2. Rapid brain growth:** By age two, the brain reaches **almost 80%** of adult weight. Synapses peak early; density reaches adult levels by preschool. Frontal lobes surge in the first two years and shape planning and self-regulation.
- 3. Nutrition’s irreversibility:** Some deficiencies before three are **impossible to reverse**. Despite gains since 1993, stunting will reach **10% only by 2075** at current trends. Doubling the pace can target **2047**.

Nutrition and cognition are one fabric

- 1. Interdependent systems:** Nutrition fuels brain function. Without adequate intake, **permanent cognitive damage** can occur. We are what we eat and what we think.
- 2. Evidence from Vellore:** A birth-cohort study in Vellore found early iron deficiency lowers verbal performance and processing speed at five. It also weakens expressive language before two.
- 3. Stimulation plus nutrition works better:** Stand-alone nutrition programmes have **low to moderate** impact. Combined **nutrition and stimulation** produce stronger results because early learning is fast and lasting.

Programmes shaping early childhood

- 1. ICDS’s twin pillars:** ICDS, a large childcare programme, can align **nutrition and early learning** as co-equal pillars.

- 2. Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi:** This initiative seeks to keep **nutrition and cognition** moving together in early years.
- 3. Navchetana stimulation framework:** Navchetana offers **140 age-tailored activities** in a 36-month calendar. Parents, caregivers, and Anganwadi or crèche workers use it during home visits for **play-based** learning.

Home visits and caregiving practice

- 1. Using the calendar at home:** Well-conducted home visits apply the calendar so children under three get **age-matched stimulation** on time.
- 2. Linking food and play:** Visits also promote **adequate, timely, nutrient-rich food** alongside stimulation to support holistic growth.
- 3. Preventing delays:** This approach lowers the risk of developmental delays that stem from nutritional deficits.

Gaps and the road ahead

- 1. Strengthen ICDS delivery:** Nearly **14 lakh** Anganwadi centres and workers lead this work, but gaps remain. ICDS must widen coverage and saturate target groups with high-quality health, nutrition, and early learning.
- 2. Modernise and measure:** Leverage technology, expand urban services, and improve access and delivery of pre-primary education. **Evaluate** health, learning, and psychosocial well-being of under-six children.
- 3. Support women's workforce entry:** Expand **crèche provision** through public, community, and public-private models.
- 4. Why urgency matters:** What is lost early cannot be regained. Investing now empowers children and women and prepares society as **automation** reduces low-skill jobs.

Question for practice:

Discuss why the first 1,000 days are critical for child development and how ICDS, Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi, and Navchetana link nutrition with cognitive stimulation.

India must reform and reengage Southeast Asia.

Source: The post India must reform and reengage Southeast Asia has been created, based on the article "**New Delhi must look east again as global relations change shape**" published in "**Live Mint**" on 25th August 2025
UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations

Context: India's geopolitical moment mirrors 1991, demanding reforms and a renewed Look East. Engagement with Southeast Asia grew since the 1990s, yet integration lagged. Misaligned aims, U.S. policy shifts under Donald Trump, and ASEAN's China dependence make economic liberalization and tighter regional partnerships urgent.

Engagement Without Integration

- 1. Geopolitics versus geoeconomics:** India approached ASEAN mainly to balance China. ASEAN expected India as a second geo-economic partner. This mismatch kept economics secondary for India and security for ASEAN, preserving distance.
- 2. Wariness of China-linked agreements:** India stayed wary of regional trade agreements that included China. ASEAN states, except Vietnam and the Philippines to some extent, were cool to tighter security ties that could provoke Beijing. The result is a sub-optimal equilibrium.
- 3. Limits of past engagement:** Engagement increased after the 1990s. Yet integration did not follow. Thirty years after Look East began, ties remain short of potential.

A Changed Strategic Setting

- 1. Unsettled U.S. security guarantees:** Washington's old East Asia playbook was discarded under Donald Trump; allies and ASEAN can no longer presume a U.S. umbrella.
- 2. Trade and coercive power:** U.S. trade ties may hinge on politics. Economic power is used coercively. ASEAN economies heavily depend on China.
- 3. Opportunities to recast ties:** India, ASEAN, and East Asian capitals now have openings—and imperatives—to redesign ties. Security and trade assumptions need rethinking.

Perceptions and Partnership Gaps

- 1. Mixed regional trust:** The 2025 ISEAS survey shows limited Indian influence. Reservations about India's capacity are 35.8%. Trust stands close at 35.3%.
- 2. Why some trust India:** Among those who trust India, 30.1% view it as a responsible stakeholder that respects and champions international law. Vietnam (49.1%), Singapore (37.5%), Indonesia (37.3%), Brunei (32.5%), and Cambodia (26.4%) share this view. Almost a fifth, 19.0%, credit India with resources and will for leadership.
- 3. Why some distrust India:** Among those who distrust India, 40.2% say India lacks capacity or will for leadership. Another 30.3% think India is distracted by internal and sub-continental issues.
- 4. Indonesia's overlooked centrality:** Elite Indonesians ranked India near the bottom for relevance among dialogue partners. The two share civilizational links and democratic values. They are neighbours, only 180 km apart. Indonesia can anchor a new security quadrilateral with Vietnam, Japan, and India. A U.S.-Japan-Australia-India quad seemed impossible until 2007; initiative made it real.

Economic Choices Ahead

- 1. Re-examining RCEP:** Whatever the 2019 reasons, the decision merits review. The previous terms may not return.
- 2. Services in the bargain:** India could press for a deal that includes services. India's market is more attractive after U.S. tariff hikes.
- 3. Managing China concerns:** Concerns over Chinese exports are real. Yet shielding every Indian industry forever is not viable.
- 4. Avoiding isolation:** Remaining outside the East Asian economic bloc risks isolation. India cannot afford that outcome.

Question for practice:

Discuss the reasons for India's limited integration with Southeast Asia and the steps to strengthen ties.

RBI reviews inflation targeting framework and transparency

Source: The post RBI reviews inflation targeting framework and transparency has been created, based on the article "RBI must keep inflation firmly in its crosshairs" published in "Live Mint" on 25th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: RBI's discussion paper, issued last Thursday in its five-year review, seeks feedback on **four questions** about India's monetary policy framework. The focus is whether **flexible inflation targeting (FIT)** needs refinement, and how operations and transparency can support **credibility** and **growth stability**.

For detailed information on **India's inflation targeting framework has delivered stable outcomes** [read this article here](#)

Choosing the Inflation Indicator

- 1. Headline over core:** The DP favours **headline inflation**. For India, targeting core is weak since **food matters for many households**.
- 2. Weight of food in CPI:** Food's weight is **about 46%** for a large number. Ignoring it would miss the prices that matter most.
- 3. Anticipated CPI update:** A CPI recast using 2023–24 HCES is underway, replacing 2011–12 data. As weights change, food volatility's impact should ease.

Target Level and Tolerance Band

- 1. Keeping the 4% anchor:** The DP supports **status quo**. The **4% target** balances growth and stability in a fast-growing economy.
- 2. Evidence from the FIT period:** Despite the pandemic and later spikes, average inflation since 2016 is **4.9%**, versus **6.8%** before FIT. **The framework has worked**.
- 3. Retaining the 2–6% band:** A **±2 percentage-point band (2–6%)** gives the MPC flexibility to prioritize inflation or growth as conditions evolve.

Point Target versus Only a Range

- 1. Maintain the 4% point target:** Dropping the point target for only a range may **dilute the framework** and **erode credibility**.
- 2. International reference:** **New Zealand** used a **range for 12 years** before adopting a **point target**. The DP advises India **not** to shift to range-only.

Operational Improvements and Transparency

- 1. Align rate and liquidity actions:** End the **dichotomy** where **repo hikes** coincided with **liquidity easing**, which **blunted transmission**.
- 2. Report breaches publicly:** When inflation exceeds **6% for three consecutive quarters**, RBI must report to government. **There is no mandate to publish**. The last breach—**five quarters from Q4 2021–22 to Q4 2022–23—was not released**.
- 3. Evolving capacity:** FIT remains **work-in-progress**. **Institutional memory** is developing, and **financial markets are shallow** by global standards. Overall, FIT **has served India well**, and each review is an **opportunity to improve**.

Question for practice:

Examine why the RBI discussion paper supports retaining a 4% inflation target with a 2–6% tolerance band under India's FIT framework.

Press freedom faces threats under misuse of new law

Source: The post Press freedom faces threats under misuse of new law has been created, based on the article "**The dangerous wiring together of a 'conspiracy'**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 26th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: **GS Paper2-** Constitution of India —significant provisions and basic structure And Structure, organisation and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.

Context: The FIR filed in Assam against journalists Karan Thapar and Siddharth Varadarajan has sparked serious debate. It raises concerns about the misuse of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) to suppress free speech. The case reflects wider threats to press freedom, police accountability, and respect for judicial mandates in India. For detailed information on **New Sedition Law (Section 152) – Issues & Way Forward** [read this article here](#)

The FIR and Its Basis

- 1. Accusations and Targets:** The FIR, lodged on May 9, 2025, in Guwahati, accuses the two journalists of provoking unrest, undermining national security, and spreading hostile narratives. The charges stem from articles and video interviews published by *The Wire*.
- 2. Weakness of the Case:** The complaint is largely an expression of opinion. It took the Crime Branch three months to act and summon the accused on August 12, 2025. The Supreme Court has barred coercive action, but the summons itself creates intimidation.
- 3. Judicial Recognition of Press Freedom:** The case recalls the 1950 *Romesh Thappar* ruling, where the Supreme Court recognised freedom of the press as essential to democracy. The present developments stand in sharp contrast to that principle.

Sedition Disguised in New Law

- 1. Section 152 of the BNS:** Although sedition is removed, Section 152 introduces the offence of endangering sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India. It covers attempts to excite secession, rebellion, or separatist activity and provides for life imprisonment.
- 2. Ambiguity in Application:** The terms “sovereignty and integrity” in Article 19 relate to the breakup of the nation, nothing less. Mere criticism or radical views cannot amount to such an offence. Yet, the law’s wording allows wide and dangerous interpretation.
- 3. Constitutional Questions:** The validity of Section 152 is uncertain. A Constitution Bench must decide its constitutionality. Until then, its misuse continues to pose risks to freedom of expression.

Consequences of Police Summons

- 1. Freezing Effect on Expression:** The earlier “chilling effect” of sedition has turned into a freezing effect. Any journalist or citizen critical of government policy risks being accused of undermining national security. This threat bulldozes dissent and silences debate.
- 2. Financial and Practical Burden:** Defending against frivolous cases is expensive. Legal fees, travel, and lodging add up. Journalists must travel to Guwahati, face repeated questioning, and bear heavy costs. Police officers face no accountability for such harassment.
- 3. Need for Alternatives:** Video conferencing offers a fairer method of questioning. It saves costs, ensures recording of questions and answers, and prevents false claims of non-cooperation. Delhi has already allowed cross-examination of police officers via video calls. The same method should apply to accused journalists.

Harassment Through Process

- 1. Weaponisation of Section 152:** The summons to Abhisar Sharma for portraying the state as corrupt and illegitimate shows how the law is being weaponised. Though sedition is deleted, its essence survives in harsher form.
- 2. Defiance of Court Orders:** The Supreme Court in *Youth Bar Association of India* (2016) and the Karnataka High Court (2024) held that accused persons must get FIR copies. Yet, both Thapar and Varadarajan failed to obtain it for over a week. The police acted with impunity and disregard for the law.

3. Expanding the Scope: The investigation may widen to include former intelligence officials, senior journalists, and defence experts linked to the interviews. This possibility threatens to expand harassment to a much larger circle.

Questions of Accountability

1. Respect for Law and Rights: Denying FIR copies and misusing summons shows disregard for due process. An accused must know the allegations against them. Ignoring this principle reflects arrogance and negligence.

2. Larger Implications: The misuse of Section 152 undermines institutions and democracy. Three questions remain urgent: Should Section 152 remain in law? Should police be compelled to follow legal mandates? And, should the state be held accountable for violating rights?

Question for practice:

Examine the implications of Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita on press freedom and accountability in India.

India deepens Japan ties while balancing China and America

Source: The post India deepens Japan ties while balancing China and America has been created, based on the article “India-Japan ties — old partners, new priorities” published in “The Hindu” on 26th August 2025

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

Context: India's Prime Minister's August 29 Japan-China trip occurs amid geopolitical flux. India-China tensions show tentative easing, while U.S. reliability is in doubt under Trump. Tokyo therefore becomes a stage for signalling India's priorities beyond any single bilateral.

For detailed information on **India Japan Relationship** [read this article here](#)

Geopolitical Setting and Itinerary

1. Flux in the global order: The visit begins in Tokyo and moves to the SCO summit in Tianjin. This sequencing underscores careful navigation.

2. India-China stabilisation signals: Direct flights have resumed, visa rules eased, and trade facilitation advanced. These steps suggest cautious normalisation after Galwan.

3. Managing parallel relationships: India engages a trusted partner and a competitor in one week. Neither relationship is allowed to dictate the other.

4. Purpose beyond the bilateral: Tokyo signals regional intent to the Indo-Pacific.

Japan's Economic Commitments

1. Decade-long investment pledge: Japan announced ¥10 trillion (about \$68 billion) for India over ten years. It is among Tokyo's most ambitious commitments to New Delhi.

2. Sectoral priorities: Funds target infrastructure, manufacturing, clean energy, and technology. The goal is to deepen complementary growth.

3. High-speed rail and technology: Japan backs the E10 series Shinkansen for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor. It reflects economic collaboration and willingness to transfer cutting-edge technology.

4. Confidence in India's trajectory: The pledge signals a long-term stake in India. It comes as many global investors remain cautious about China.

Security and Technology Partnerships

1. **Updating the 2008 security declaration:** Both sides plan to revise the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation. The aim is alignment with contemporary realities.
2. **Economic Security Initiative:** Cooperation will cover semiconductors, critical minerals, pharmaceuticals, and clean energy. It supports diversified and resilient supply chains.
3. **Upgraded digital partnership:** New workstreams include artificial intelligence and startup ecosystems. Technology links widen beyond legacy areas.
4. **Shared Indo-Pacific outlook:** The agenda reinforces a free, open, rules-based Indo-Pacific. India–Japan ties move to the forefront of regional cooperation.

The U.S. Factor and the Quad

1. **Unpredictability under Trump:** Signals from Washington have turned episodic. Reliability as a partner is questioned.
2. **Risk to hard-won gains:** Progress since George W. Bush through Joe Biden is at stake. Defence, technology, and people-to-people pillars could erode.
3. **Quad's momentum and limits:** The Quad remains essential to India's vision. Its coherence hinges on sustained U.S. commitment.
4. **Consequences for partners:** India, Japan, and Australia face credibility and depth challenges. Strategy must adapt to possible U.S. disengagement.

Strategic Signalling and Implications for India

1. **A steady intent:** India will keep channels with Beijing open, hedge U.S. unpredictability, and deepen ties with like-minded powers. The approach is deliberate.
2. **Japan as anchor partner:** Amid uncertainty, Tokyo offers consistency, resources, and a shared outlook. Commitments span economic resilience and maritime security.
3. **Flexibility with clarity:** Indian diplomacy shows flexibility without losing strategic clarity. Signalling matters as much as deliverables.
4. **Recognising the dependable ballast:** The visit is about consolidating where reliability lies. Japan emerges as a dependable ballast for India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's Prime Minister's visit to Japan and China reflects strategic balancing amid Japan's investment pledge and U.S. unpredictability.

India passes online gaming law banning real money games

Source: The post India passes online gaming law banning real money games has been created, based on the article "What does the new online gaming Act outline?" published in "The Hindu" on 26th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context: In August 2025, Parliament passed the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act. Lok Sabha cleared it on August 20 after seven minutes. Rajya Sabha passed it on August 21. Presidential Assent came on August 22. **The law promotes e-sports and social gaming, and bans real-money games (RMGs).**

For detailed information on **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill 2025** [read this article here](#)

Categories and scope

1. Three segments and policy stance: Online games are classified as e-sports, social gaming, and RMGs. **Promotion applies to the first two; all RMGs and their ads are banned.**

2. Definition and illustrations of RMGs: RMGs include any game of skill, chance, or both. They involve a fee or an expectation of money or convertible stakes. **Poker, Rummy, Fantasy Cricket, and Ludo variants qualify.**

3. E-sports criteria: E-sports are recognised under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025, and must register with the regulator.

4. Social gaming and facilitation: Social gaming lacks a distinct legal definition. **Section 4 allows the government to facilitate recreational and educational social games.**

Regulation and oversight

1. Offences, penalties, and player liability: Offering or funding RMGs is punishable by up to three years' imprisonment or a ₹1 crore fine. Unlawful advertisements can draw up to two years or ₹50 lakh. **Offences are cognisable and non-bailable under BNSS, 2023.** Players face **no penal action.**

2. Blocking powers and cross-border reach: CERT-IN will block or disable offending apps. **Interpol may be involved against offshore operators.** The Centre may constitute a regulator for recognising, categorising, and registering games.

3. Continuity with 2023 IT Rules: In 2023, IT Rules treated gaming firms as intermediaries under self-regulatory bodies. **KYC, parental controls, and age ratings** were required.

4. Minors and public funding: The Act does not constrain minors from e-sports or social games. **It provides budgetary support from the Consolidated Fund of India to promote social gaming.**

Rationale, harms, and practical gaps

1. Financial losses and addictive design: Government data shows **₹15,000 crore** lost annually on RMGs. The Minister says algorithms **do not allow net winners over time.** He said it was **not knee-jerk.**

2. Public health and social harms: WHO links RMGs to compulsive behaviour, distress, and financial hardship. **Thirty-two suicides in 31 months** were reported in Karnataka. **Industry warns of two lakh jobs at risk across 400+ firms.**

3. Crime, tax, and fraud evidence: A 2023 Parliamentary Panel flagged terror-funding risks. A 2022 financial intelligence report found **₹2,000 crore** tax evasion. **GST evasion is pegged at ₹30,000 crore.** The Defence Ministry's think tank found **FIEWIN defrauded ₹400 crore,** with ED tracing mule accounts and crypto wallets.

4. Opacity, offshore bases, and circumvention: The Act cites opaque algorithms, bots, and offshore locations. These weaken fairness and enforcement. **Despite a promised robust framework, gaps remain.** Firms may bypass bans using VPNs or "information cash play."

Federalism, taxation, and courts

1. State powers and prior bans: Entries 34 and 62 of the State List cover betting and gambling. Telangana (2017) banned all online gaming, including skill-based games; Andhra Pradesh (2020) banned online gambling; **Tamil Nadu (2022) banned Rummy and Poker.**

2. GST reclassification and dispute: In October 2023, **28% GST** was levied on the entry fee or deposit. Firms opposed the change and retrospective effect. **The Supreme Court stayed notices.**

3. Skill versus chance and constitutional concerns: The Supreme Court earlier held that Rummy and Fantasy Sports involve substantial skill. **The Act removes the skill-chance distinction.** Critics say this threatens **Article 19(1)(g)** rights.

4. **Possible judicial relief:** If challenged, the Court may grant interim relief or seek the government's rationale. **Key rulings on skill classification and retrospective tax are pending.**

Question for practice:

Examine the government's stated reasons for banning real-money games under the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025.

Biotech and healthtech together can democratise healthcare in India

Source: The post Biotech and healthtech together can democratise healthcare in India has been created, based on the article "The wellness double helix" published in "Financial Express" on 26th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Awareness in the fields of bio-technology And GS Paper2-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health,

Context: India's healthcare faces scale and access challenges. A vast population, uneven geography, and under-resourced public facilities—serving 65% in "rurban" areas—strain delivery. Urban private hospitals grow, but gaps persist. Recent digital initiatives and a push for biotech together trigger a debate on how to democratise care. For detailed information on **Technology and Innovation in Healthcare** [read this article here](#)

Systemic Challenges and Digital Bridges

1. **Population scale and facility gaps:** The system must serve the world's largest, highly dispersed population. Public facilities are under-resourced while well-funded private hospitals cluster in cities. This creates unequal access.
2. **Telemedicine as a bridge:** eSanjeevani has enabled 12 crore tele-consultations. Private platforms add reach. Patients avoid long travel. The tools also soften rural doctor shortages.
3. **Digital public infrastructure:** Electronic health records under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and AI Centres of Excellence show a forward-looking approach. U-Win digitises vaccination services. e-Hospital links patients with hospitals and doctors. e-Bloodbank is maturing.

Why Biotech Must Lift Healthtech

1. **From primary care to precise detection:** Digital rails widen reach, but quality depends on biotech. Robust biotech moves care beyond basic symptom checks to large-scale detection of diseases and genetic disorders. It reduces trial-and-error treatments that raise costs and harm outcomes.
2. **Indigenous R&D for access:** Local biotech can deliver biosimilars, vaccines, and targeted therapies for the masses. Combined with healthtech, it shifts care from reactive to proactive.
3. **Data-driven proactive care:** A rural worker's app connected to portable biotech and bioinformatics can reveal hidden patterns. Wearable data analysed by AI can surface latent risks. At scale, such data can signal an emerging crisis and enable timely interventions.

Building the Biotech Ecosystem

1. **New capacity and regional clusters:** Parliament was told on July 30 that 94 biotech incubators have been set up since 2012 with about ₹490 crore. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Telangana each host more than 10 incubators. BIRAC supports startups.
2. **Healthcare applications:** Gene editing corrects defects and treats viral infections and cancers. Genomics identifies tumor-driving mutations and guides therapy. mRNA therapeutics instruct cells to produce needed proteins. Biomanufacturing produces insulin and vaccines at scale.
3. **Accelerated discovery and new modalities:** AI speeds every drug-discovery stage. Personalised regimens emerge from large datasets. Virtual clinical trials operate today. Organ-mimicking chips and tissue engineering reshape repair and replacement.

Wider Impact and Global Collaboration

1. **Beyond healthcare and bio-convergence:** Biotech improves crops, builds resilience to salinity or drought, and boosts nutrition. Industry uses microbes to tackle pollution, make biofuels, and develop biodegradable plastics. Bio-convergence blends AI, biology, engineering, and computing.

2. **Collaboration and harmonisation:** Academia, industry, and governments must collaborate openly. Sharing anonymised patient data accelerates solutions. Regulatory harmonisation enables cross-border specialist consultations and wider impact.

3. **Scaling the vision:** Life-changing biotech innovations should ride the healthtech highway to maximise global benefit.

Question for practice:

Examine how the integration of healthtech and biotech can transform India's healthcare system from reactive to proactive care.

National Cooperative Policy 2025

Source: The post National Cooperative Policy 2025 has been created, based on the article "Cooperatives at a Crossroads" published in "The Hindu" on 27th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper -2- Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

Context: Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah introduced the new National Cooperative Policy 2025, replacing the framework that had been in effect for 23 years.

Cooperatives are the backbone of India's rural and participatory economy, with **over 8.44 lakh societies and more than 30 crore members**. The **National Cooperative Policy 2025** aims to rejuvenate the sector under the vision of "*Sahkar-se-Samridhi*", making cooperatives central to achieving **Viksit Bharat 2047**.

Key features of the National Cooperative Policy 2025

1. **Legislative & Institutional Reforms:** It amend cooperative laws for transparency, autonomy, and ease of business; digitise registrar offices; build real-time databases; revive sick cooperatives.
2. **Financial Empowerment:** It strengthens PACS–DCCB–SCB credit structure; expands cooperative banks' roles; allows handling of government transactions.
3. **Business Ecosystem:** It promotes model cooperative villages, rural product clusters (honey, spices, tea), and cooperative branding under *Bharat*.
4. **Technology & Future-Readiness:** It develops a national Cooperative Stack with Agri-Stack; integrates with ONDC/GeM; sets up incubators and Centres of Excellence.
5. **Inclusivity:** It ensures participation of women, youth, SC/STs, differently-abled; adopt model bye-laws; run awareness drives in schools/colleges.
6. **Sectoral Diversification:** It encourages cooperatives in renewable energy, waste management, healthcare, education, organic farming, biogas, ethanol, and digital aggregator services.
7. **Youth Capacity Building:** It launches cooperative courses in higher education, creates a digital cooperative job exchange, promotes digital and financial literacy.

Rationale Behind the Policy

1. **Economic Modernisation:** Cooperatives need to align with new-age sectors like renewable energy, shipping, and technology.
2. **Financial Inclusion:** To expand credit reach to farmers, artisans, and rural communities where banking penetration is weak.
3. **Uniform Standards:** Addressing governance gaps and scam-related credibility issues by standardising rules across states.
4. **Employment Generation:** Tapping cooperative structures to create entrepreneurial opportunities for youth in a rapidly urbanising economy.

Concerns & Challenges

1. **Federalism Issues** – Cooperative societies fall under the **State List (Entry 32) of 7th Schedule of Constitution**; central policy intervention raises fears of unconstitutional overreach.
2. **Political Suspensions** – States like Kerala allege that the policy is a move by the Centre to wrest control over their strong cooperative networks.
3. **Scam & Credibility Crisis** – Many cooperative banks face allegations of embezzlement and mismanagement, undermining depositor confidence.
 - Example - Scam allegations related to the Karuvannur Service Cooperative Bank in Thrissur district of Kerala.
4. **Grassroots Alienation** – Over-centralisation may weaken the trust and localised character of cooperatives that thrive on community participation.

Way Forward

1. **Respect Federal Principles** – Ensure Centre-State collaboration by giving states autonomy in cooperative governance.
2. **Transparent Regulation** – Introduce safeguards, audits, and depositor protection mechanisms to restore trust in cooperative institutions.
3. **Capacity Building** – Train cooperative leaders in professional management, digital literacy, and modern financial practices.
4. **Diversification with Inclusivity** – Encourage cooperatives in sunrise sectors while retaining their grassroots orientation, ensuring farmers, workers, and rural communities remain central.

Question: Critically analyse the National Cooperative Policy 2025 — its rationale, key challenges, and the way forward in balancing central intervention with state autonomy.

India's relations with Asian Nations

Source: The post India's relations with Asian Nations has been created, based on the article "The Asian Challenge" published in "The Indian Express" on 27th August 2025.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on an Asian tour, visiting Tokyo for a bilateral meeting and later traveling to Tianjin to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit. The visit is seen as significant for giving fresh momentum to Indian diplomacy in the region.

Current Geopolitical Context

1. **India-US Relations:** India's ties with the US have seen **tensions over trade**, technology restrictions, and policy differences on Russia.
2. **China Factor:** China has emerged as a manufacturing powerhouse, creating economic vulnerabilities for India due to **trade deficits (almost \$100 billion)** and dependence on imports.
3. **Russia's Tilt:** Russia, once a close partner of India, is now increasingly **aligned with China**, thereby complicating India's foreign policy choices.

Strategic Partnership with Japan

1. **Shared Vision:** India and Japan share a common interest in maintaining a free, open, and stable Indo-Pacific region.
2. **Economic & Infrastructure Cooperation:** The two countries are collaborating on infrastructure, technology partnerships, and diversification of global supply chains.
3. **Defence & Security:** Defence and security cooperation are deepening through joint exercises like **Malabar** and India's participation in the **QUAD** grouping.
4. **Balancing China:** Japan also provides economic opportunities and acts as a reliable partner for India in balancing China's influence.

India and the SCO

- **Opportunities:** The SCO offers India a platform for **counter-terrorism** cooperation and regional dialogue with Central Asian states.
 - The forum also provides an opportunity to participate in discussions on **connectivity and infrastructure**, even though India remains wary of China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- **Challenges:** **Pakistan's presence** within the SCO complicates India's security concerns and limits the effectiveness of the grouping. China's consistent shielding of Pakistan on issues of terrorism demonstrates the contradictions within the SCO.

Way Forward

1. **Engage with SCO:** India needs to continue engaging with the SCO to **avoid isolation in the regional security framework**.
2. **Strengthen Partnerships:** India should strengthen its partnerships with **Japan, the US, and ASEAN nations** to counterbalance China's dominance.
3. **Reduce Dependence on China:** Reducing economic dependence on Chinese imports and **promoting self-reliance** in manufacturing and technology is critical for strategic autonomy.
4. **Support Neighbors:** India should take a proactive role in supporting smaller South Asian states like Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh to prevent them from falling under China's influence.

Question: India's Asian diplomacy today involves balancing engagement with forums like the SCO while deepening strategic partnerships with democratic allies such as Japan. Discuss the opportunities and challenges of this dual approach in the current geopolitical context.

Implications of tariff measures and way forward for India

Source: The post **Implications of tariff measures and way forward for India** has been created, based on the article "Countering the tariff" published in "The Indian Express" on 28th August 2025

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

Context: The US recently imposed "secondary tariffs" of 25% on certain Indian products, in addition to earlier 25% "reciprocal tariffs," affecting sectors like pharmaceuticals, mobile phones, semiconductors, and chemicals.

Implications for India

1. **Economic Impact:** Nearly 55% of India's \$89 billion exports to the US face higher tariffs, especially in **pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, textiles, and gems & jewellery**.
2. **Trade Diversion:** US tariffs make Indian goods less competitive; exports may be diverted to South and Southeast Asia, which already enjoy lower tariff regimes.
3. **Agriculture & Food Security:** Tariffs on soya, dairy, and other agricultural products affect farmers and rural livelihoods.
4. **Energy Security:** With the US halting Russian oil imports, India may face difficulties if energy trade routes are restricted further.
5. **Diplomatic Strain:** Such unilateral actions undermine trust in bilateral negotiations (e.g., stalled US-India bilateral trade deal of \$500 billion target).

WTO & Global Trade Concerns

1. Violation of **WTO binding commitments** and the **MFN principle** and raise questions about the future of global trade rules.
2. Weakening of the WTO's dispute resolution system (Appellate Body non-functional since 2019).
3. Sets a precedent for other countries to bypass multilateral rules through unilateral tariffs.

Way Forward for India

1. **Diversification of Export Basket:** Focus on new destinations in Africa, Latin America, ASEAN, and the EU to reduce dependence on the US.

2. **Strengthen FTAs:** Expedite trade agreements with the EU, UK, and Australia to hedge against US trade unpredictability.
3. **WTO Reform Push:** Work with like-minded countries to restore WTO dispute settlement mechanism.
4. **Domestic Competitiveness:** Improve logistics, lower production costs, and support labour-intensive industries (textiles, leather, handicrafts).
5. **Strategic Autonomy:** Balance relations with major powers while safeguarding national economic interests (e.g., continuing imports of Russian energy).

Question: The recent US tariffs on Indian goods have raised concerns about WTO commitments and India's export strategy. Discuss the implications of such tariff measures and suggest a way forward for India.

H-1B visa program: Its benefits and criticisms

Source: The post **H-1B visa program: Its benefits and criticisms** has been created, based on the article "H1B Visa and its Impact on India" published in "The Indian Express" on 28th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper-2 International Relations

Context: Recently, US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick termed the H-1B visa program a "scam," reigniting the debate around its economic and social implications.

About H-1B visa program

The H-1B visa program, created under the Immigration Act of 1990, allows American employers to hire foreign skilled workers in specialised fields such as IT, engineering, and medicine. It has been a key pathway for skilled Indian professionals, with more than 70% of approved H-1B petitions in recent years coming from India.

Benefits of the H-1B Program

1. **For U.S.A.'s Economy**
 - It **bridges skill gaps in STEM fields** where the domestic supply is insufficient.
 - It **supports innovation and competitiveness of US companies**, especially in tech (Google, Microsoft, etc.).
 - It **lowers operational costs for firms**, boosting profits and growth.
2. **For India**
 - It **provides global exposure and opportunities for Indian professionals**.
 - It **enables large remittance inflows to benefit** the Indian economy.
 - It **enhances India's human capital and knowledge transfer** upon return.

Criticisms of the H-1B Program

1. American workers argue **that the program displaces domestic jobs by allowing companies to hire cheaper foreign workers**.
2. Concerns of **wage depression and exploitation of workers**.
3. Critics claim that it **suppresses wages and is used by firms primarily as a cost-cutting mechanism** rather than to address real skill shortages
4. Right-wing groups argue it **undermines American workers and sovereignty**.
5. Criticised as **benefiting billionaires and corporations** more than the average worker.

Question: Critically examine the debate surrounding the H-1B visa program in the United States.

Ban alone cannot protect children from gaming

Source: The post Ban alone cannot protect children from gaming has been created, based on the article "ADDICTION, NOT PLAY" published in "Indian Express" on 28th August 2025

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

Context: India's ban on online real-money gaming has sparked debate. The article argues that mental health, especially of children and adolescents, is the missing lens. It urges a public-health approach that recognises compulsive use, family strain, and the need for prevention alongside regulation.

For detailed information on **Online Gaming Act, 2025 – Provisions, Significance & Challenges** [read this article here](#)

Harms of Online Real-Money Gaming

1. Gambling-like design and compulsion: These products use variable rewards, rapid gratification, and tight engagement loops. They are built to sustain play, extract payments, and create dependency rather than provide neutral entertainment. This pattern aligns with **WHO's ICD-11 "gaming disorder"** criteria of impaired control, priority over daily activities, and persistence despite harm.

Note: Gaming disorder is defined in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as a pattern of gaming behavior ("digital-gaming" or "video-gaming") characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences.

2. Adolescent vulnerability and behaviours: For impressionable users, leisure can shift into addiction. Many lose track of time, conceal use, or steal to fund play, and some develop anxiety, depression, or suicidal thoughts after losses or forced stoppage.

3. Household and emotional fallout: Parents often discover harm late, after spiking bills or academic collapse. Homes become tense and secretive, with arguments and distress replacing trust and routine.

4. Documented severe outcomes: Across India, cases include drained accounts, debt, and spirals of behavioural and emotional distress. In some tragic instances, the consequences have included suicide.

Issues with India's Ban-Centric Approach

1. Policy lens and missing emphasis: Debate focuses on economics, legality, and regulation. The article stresses that mental-health costs remain sidelined, weakening the policy response.

2. Protective relief from bans: A ban can remove an immediate source of harm. Families often experience quick relief through fewer conflicts and reduced financial losses.

3. Value of partial bans and age-gating: Targeted restrictions can shield minors while permitting informed adults to play. Lower exposure for younger users may delay addiction and allow parents to guide healthier digital habits.

4. Limits of prohibition alone: Therapy cannot be an afterthought. Enforcement without parallel support risks treating symptoms while core behavioural drivers persist.

What Is Needed to Protect Children

1. Prevent displacement with guided care: When access is cut, compulsive energy can shift to pornography, social-media overuse, or substances. Provide supportive guidance so children do not migrate to less regulated spaces and household tension does not persist.

2. Implement school-based screening and counselling: Integrate routine mental-health screening in schools and expand child-friendly counselling. Early identification and timely care reduce escalation and support recovery.

3. Train parents and educators for early response: Equip adults to recognise warning signs and act early. Skilled parents and teachers can de-escalate crises and rebuild healthy boundaries.

4. Run joint awareness campaigns within a public-health frame: Reach students and caregivers together. Pair thoughtful regulation with counselling and prevention to create a safer digital environment where families regain balance and children build healthier relationships with technology.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the effectiveness of a ban-only approach to online real-money gaming in protecting children.

India strengthens layered air defence through integration

Source: The post Press freedom faces threats under misuse of new law has been created, based on the article “A stronger air shield” published in “Indian Express” on 28th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

Context: DRDO announced the maiden flight test of an all-indigenous Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) off the coast of Odisha. The three-layered system targets aircraft, drones, and missiles up to 30–35 km. This test, part of Mission Sudarshan Chakra 2035. This highlights India’s progress toward self-reliant, multi-domain defence systems and future international collaborations for layered security.

For detailed information on Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) [read this article here](#)

IADWS and Its Significance

- 1. Layers and ranges:** IADWS combines a QR-SAM (30 km), an Advanced VSHORADS (up to 6 km), and a laser-based DEW (2–4 km). Together, they cover outer, inner, and terminal zones.
- 2. Centralised control:** A DRDL (Defence Research & Development Laboratory)-developed Centralised Command and Control Centre coordinates detection, decision, and engagement. It enables integrated, real-time operation of all layers.
- 3. Trial outcomes:** Three targets—two high-speed fixed-wing UAVs and a multi-copter drone—were simultaneously destroyed. All components performed flawlessly, validating lab-built integration.

IGMDP Foundations and Capability Growth

- 1. Genesis and clustered approach:** Technology synergising began with the IGMDP (1983) under A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. A five-laboratory “missile cluster” in Hyderabad pursued linked goals.
- 2. Strategic systems and derivatives:** ASL developed Agni and Prithvi, the delivery end of nuclear deterrence. These evolved into ABM, ASAT, and MIRV capabilities.
- 3. Tactical missile stream:** DRDL handled Trishul and Akash (anti-aircraft) and Nag (anti-tank). These became more capable tactical missiles over time.
- 4. Enabling laboratories:** The IGMDP spawned a Young Scientists Laboratory for AI and quantum. RCI leads navigation, guidance/homing, C2, high-temperature materials; TBRL focuses on warhead design.

Role of Industry in Strengthening Air Defence

- 1. Trickle-down to industry:** Public-sector advances now enter private products, widening India’s defence manufacturing base.
- 2. CUMI’s radome manufacturing:** CUMI signed a technology transfer pact with DRDO to make ceramic radomes. This moves critical know-how into industry.
- 3. Ceramics for extreme regimes:** Missile and aircraft radomes face extreme heating, including re-entry. Indian radomes use specialised DRDO-developed ceramics.

What Should Be Done to Build a Stronger Shield

1. **Rationale and partners:** Beyond domestic synergy, India can **collaborate with Israel** for integrated defences against **combined air operations** like **Operation Sindoor**.
2. **Iron Dome's cycle and costs:** **Iron Dome** tracks threats within **~160 km**. The **Tamir interceptor** flies at **~1 km/s**; unit cost fell from **~\$100,000** to **~\$40-50,000**.
3. **Progressive outer layers :** Beyond **Iron Dome**, Israel employs **THAAD** to intercept **ballistic missiles outside the atmosphere** at **up to ~200 km**. **David's Sling** adds a **farther layer** with **coverage to ~300 km**. **Arrow 3** forms the **outermost ring**, defeating **medium-range ballistic missiles** at **up to ~2,400 km**. The layers engage **progressively farther out** to keep threats away from defended areas.

India's Approach to Collaborations

1. **Joint development principle :** In international co-development, **India uses its strengths and partners for gaps**. The **workshare is fixed in advance**, so each side knows what to build. **India integrates the full system**, so the final product is **Indian**. This approach **keeps Indian capabilities strong** while using the partner's expertise.
2. **BrahMos experience:** With **Russia**, India handled **navigation and mission control** on **BrahMos**. The partnership enabled co-development.
3. **LR-SAM discipline:** For **LR-SAM** with Israel, India built the **rear section**; Israel provided the **front section and seeker**. India led integration, and **collaboration is pursued only when no such product already exists**.

Conclusion

The IADWS test proves India's capacity to integrate indigenous technologies into a ready defence system. Going ahead, expanding **public-private partnerships**, ensuring **cost-effective layered defence**, and following **clear collaboration rules** will be key. Together, these steps can secure a **resilient and self-reliant air defence shield** for India.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the IADWS test reflects India's layered air defence strategy and the IGMDP-driven integration of technologies across DRDO and industry.

Healthcare system in India

Source: The post **Healthcare system in India** has been created, based on the article "**Building Health for 1.4 billion Indians**" published in "**The Hindu**" on **29th August 2025**

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper-2- Health- Government Policies & Interventions

Context: India's healthcare system stands at a defining juncture. With over 1.4 billion citizens, the dual challenge is to ensure **universal access** while maintaining **affordability** and **quality**. Recent initiatives like *Ayushman Bharat* and the push for digital health highlight India's transition from crisis-based care to preventive, inclusive, and technology-enabled healthcare.

Key Challenges

- **Low Insurance Penetration:** There are only 15–18% of Indians who are insured. The premium-to-GDP ratio is 3.7% vs the global average of 7%.
- **Affordability Concerns:** Even modest premiums (₹5k–20k) remain unaffordable for many people. Catastrophic health expenditure continues to push families into financial distress due to the absence of adequate risk coverage.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Tier-2 and tier-3 cities remain underserved despite India's ability to deliver high-quality care at scale.
- **Regulation & Trust Deficit:** Unfair pricing, environmental factors, and lack of grievance redressal reduce faith in insurers.
- **Skewed Investments:** \$5.5 billion private equity investment (2023) largely flowed to metros, leaving rural and semi-urban regions behind.

- **Lifestyle & NCD Burden:** Rising diabetes, hypertension, and chronic illnesses raise costs with inadequate preventive focus.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Insurance as a Risk Pool:** There is a need to broaden coverage under *PM-JAY*, ensure fair reimbursement to private providers, and increase penetration beyond 500 million beneficiaries.
- **Focus on Prevention:** the insurance should be redesigned to cover outpatient & diagnostics. Also, there is a need for national campaigns for lifestyle modification and NCD awareness.
- **Leverage Technology:** There should be the use of AI for early detection (sepsis, cardiac issues). Also, there is a need to expand telemedicine under *Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission* for rural outreach.
- **Enhance Regulation & Transparency:** Strengthen IRDAI mechanisms, ensure fair pricing, and build trust to encourage uptake.
- **Equity in Investment:** Direct capital is needed towards tier-2 and tier-3 cities, primary care, and training of healthcare professionals.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** There is a need to align state capacity with private sector efficiency for inclusive and sustainable models.

Question: India's healthcare system is at an inflexion point. Discuss the challenges and the way forward to ensure affordable and inclusive healthcare for all.

Parliamentary Functioning

Source: The post Parliamentary Functioning has been created, based on the article "Story of another washout" published in "The Indian Express" on 29th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2-Governance

Context: Parliament is the supreme deliberative body of Indian democracy. However, recent sessions, including the Monsoon Session, have witnessed repeated disruptions, adjournments, and passage of bills without discussion.

Causes of Parliamentary Washouts

- **Partisan Standoffs:** Ruling party's reluctance to engage with the Opposition, while the Opposition resorts to protests and repeated points of order.
- **Erosion of Deliberative Space:** Business Advisory Committee (BAC) functioning reduced to formality. Important bills are frequently pushed through without achieving consensus on the floor of the House.
- **Rushing Legislation:** Important bills such as the *Digital Personal Data Protection Bill*, *Online Gaming Bill*, and *Taxation Laws Bill* were passed without discussion.
- **Weak Backchannel Negotiations:** Decline in informal government–Opposition dialogue, which is crucial for smooth functioning.
- **Misuse of Parliamentary Rules:** Frequent rejection of opposition notices for short-duration discussions under Rule 193 or adjournment motions.

Consequences

- **Democratic Deficit:** Parliament becomes a mere "*bill factory*" rather than a forum for debate and scrutiny.
- **Decline in Accountability:** Ministers escape questioning on governance failures; Opposition voices muted.
- **Poor Quality Legislation:** Laws passed without adequate debate often face constitutional or practical challenges later.
- **Public Distrust:** Citizens lose faith in Parliament as a space for genuine representation of their concerns.
- **Weakening of Committees:** Parliamentary committees, especially Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPCs), dominated by the ruling coalition, reduce credibility.

Way Forward

- **Institutionalising Dialogue:** Restore regular all-party meetings and strengthen BAC's independent role.
- **Mandating Minimum Discussion:** Require at least a fixed number of hours of debate per bill before passage.
- **Strengthening Committees:** Empower JPCs and Standing Committees with greater independence and binding recommendations.
- **Rule Reforms:** Ensure fair use of adjournment motions and points of order without diluting parliamentary productivity.
- **Cultural Change in Politics:** Shift from confrontation to consensus-building through norms of parliamentary civility.
- **Public Accountability:** Televising committee meetings, publishing legislative impact assessments, and penalising repeated disruptions.

Question: Frequent washouts of Parliament sessions undermine democracy. Discuss the causes, consequences, and reforms needed.

E-wills - The Next Generational Digital Reform India Needs

Source: The post "E-wills - The Next Generational Digital Reform India Needs" has been created, based on the article "Where there's an e-will" published in "Indian Express" on 30th August 2025.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Growth and development And Infrastructure (energy).

Context: When India flags the need for the next generation of reforms, key to that is the array of digital substacks — the Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile trinity — that democratised access to social welfare in a way no other country has. One area which has remained largely untouched and needs this reform is inheritance and wills — given India's demographics and the rising middle class, this has huge ramifications for equity, fairness and economic justice.

Introduction

E-Wills or Electronic Wills are **digital versions of traditional wills** that allow individuals to create, sign and store their last will and testament electronically. E-wills are **prepared and executed using digital technologies**, often involving electronic signatures and digital storage, unlike conventional wills which are handwritten or printed on paper.

Main Body

Issues with conventional wills

- **Rural-urban divide:** A minuscule fraction of Indians write a will; even those who do are highly concentrated in the major metro cities, leaving a huge gap in rural and remote areas.
- **Lack of expertise:** The access to and inclination for legal expertise is limited in smaller towns and villages.
- **Forgery:** In cases where conventional wills are written, forgeries, multiplicity of wills, and corresponding challenges in courts are rampant.
- **Inefficiency:** The use of written paper wills with wet (by hand) signatures and physical witnesses limits adoption and scalability.

Advantages of e-wills

- **Efficient and easy:** E-wills offer a streamlined and efficient alternative to traditional paper-based wills, addressing the challenges of physical storage, accessibility, and potential tampering.
- **Prompt process:** The e-wills cut through red tape and speed up access.
- **Remove geographic barriers:** Testators and witnesses can complete the process virtually, eliminating geographical barriers and reducing the time and cost associated with in-person interactions.

- **Reduce judicial burden:** It will reduce the burden on courts extensively, in terms of challenges to execution and authenticity, as it will address the concern of non-repudiable authentication, using auditable trails in the system infrastructure.
- **Increased accessibility:** The issue of lack of access to proper legal infrastructure in remote and rural areas will also be mitigated substantially.

Case studies

India

- **Chapter 4 of Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code Rules, 2025**
- It has implemented **procedures for fulfilment of activities like registration and novation of wills via web or mobile.**
- The rules **allow testators to register their wills/codicils** through an online process, streamlining the procedure and reducing dependency on physical paperwork.
- A testator can revoke or revive a previously registered will/codicil or declare a particular version as their last will through online registration, enhancing accessibility and clarity.
- The rules incorporate technology by providing different ways for registration, including a web portal/mobile app, document upload as well as video will statement.

From around the world

United States

- The **Uniform Electronic Wills Act** is a model law.
- It validates wills **stored electronically, allows for remote witnessing**, and includes a **"harmless error" provision** allowing for validation of wills which don't exactly meet execution requirements so long as they are readable as text and were intended to act as a will.

Canada

- In Canada, **British Columbia and Saskatchewan** are two provinces that have **enacted legislation recognising electronic wills as valid forms of testamentary instruments** respectively.
- **Bill 21 of British Columbia** updated the existing Wills, Estates and Succession Act passed in 2009 with several technological advancements: **Digital wills, remote virtual witnessing, digital storage of wills, and the ability to digitally revoke or update a will.**

Way Forward for India

- **Technology insertion:** India should allow **will-creation using digital channels** — especially mobile, including in vernacular languages; use technology to ensure non-repudiable authentication.
- **Data security:** Stringent information security measures that include the use of Aadhaar OTP/eSign "signing" of the will and by the witnesses, or other similar digital authentication, along with video testimony should be incorporated.
- **Legislative reforms:** Appropriate amendments in relevant laws should be made, including the following: The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023; The Indian Succession Act, 1925; the Information Technology Act, 2000; The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, and The Registration Act, 1908.

Question for practice:

Define Electronic Wills and issues related to it in India. Suggest some way forward in order to mainstream it in India.

Make undergraduate admissions fairer and less stressful

Source: The post Make undergraduate admissions fairer and less stressful has been created, based on the article “Detoxifying India’s entrance examination system” published in “The Hindu” on 30th August 2025

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

Context: Nearly 70 lakh students chase limited UG seats via JEE, NEET, CUET, and CLAT. Coaching scandals, an ED raid, and suicides reveal systemic harm. The article argues for simpler, fairer admissions that prioritise equity, mental health, and genuine readiness.

Why is India’s UG admissions under strain?

1. Scarcity and uneven capacity: About 15 lakh aspirants compete for 18,000-plus IIT seats. Limited capacity and uneven college quality turn tiny score gaps into life-defining outcomes.

2. Coaching empire and adolescent costs: Two-year JEE courses cost ₹6–7 lakh. Students as young as 14 practice Irodov/Krotov far beyond B.Tech needs. This breed stress, depression, and alienation, and shrinking normal adolescence.

3. Scandals signal a broken system: Branch closures, financial misconduct at a major coaching centre, an ED raid, and suicides underline systemic failure. Some States regulate coaching, but the exam-centric regime remains the root driver.

Does the current “merit” filter mismeasure readiness?

1. Overprecision without purpose: Distinguishing 91% vs 97% in boards or a 99.9 JEE percentile adds false accuracy. For B.Tech, a 70–80% PCM score is sufficient; hyper-selectivity reflects scarcity, not learning.

2. False hierarchy and exclusion: Limited seats, vast applicant numbers, and quality disparities create a hierarchy that sidelines capable students. Those who can afford coaching gain advantage, worsening urban–rural, gender, and regional gaps.

3. Psychological toll and merit critique: Pressure is immense and pervasive. As Harvard philosopher Michael Sandel argues, claims of pure merit ignore luck and privilege; lotteries can blunt toxic status competition in elite admissions.

What should be done?

1. Trust Class 12 and simplify selection: Use the board exam as the primary gauge. Set an 80% PCM eligibility bar, band candidates (90%+; 80–90%), and allocate seats through a weighted lottery. Higher marks raise odds; reservations for gender, region, and rural backgrounds operate within existing policy.

2. Learn from best international practices: Adopt the Dutch model of a threshold-based weighted lottery for oversubscribed courses. It reduces bias, promotes diversity, and eases pressure. Draw on China’s 2021 “double reduction,” which banned for-profit tutoring in school subjects and nationalised coaching to cut costs and protect student well-being.

3. Reduce coaching distortion and widen access: If entrance exams persist, ban or nationalise coaching and provide free online study materials and lectures. Reserve 50% of IIT seats vertically for rural students educated in government schools to promote social mobility and reduce structural inequality.

4. Equalise IIT value and student experience: Introduce a student exchange so cohorts study across IIT campuses over four years, promoting integration and diverse exposure. Incentivise professor transfers to equalise standards and dismantle artificial hierarchies so any IIT B.Tech carries equal value.

5. Restore balance and lower barriers: A lottery-based system frees students from the coaching treadmill, enabling school engagement and sports. It reduces financial burdens and gives every qualified student a fair shot, letting youth be youth rather than percentile-chasing machines.

Question for practice:

Discuss why India's undergraduate admission system is under strain and what reforms can make it fairer and more equitable.

India secures energy sovereignty through five pillars

Source: The post India secures energy sovereignty through five pillars has been created, based on the article “**In an unstable world, energy sovereignty is the new oil**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 30th August 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Growth and development And Infrastructure (energy).

Context: India's energy security is fragile due to heavy import dependence, a new concentration on Russian crude, and volatile geopolitics. June 2025 Israel–Iran near-war exposed risks to sea lanes and prices. The article urges “energy realism” and a five-pillar sovereignty doctrine to pre-empt shocks and stabilize the economy.

For detailed information on **India's Energy Strategy: Vision, Transformation, and Sustainable Growth** [read this article here](#)

Why is India's import dependence a national risk?

- 1. Risk quantified by macro costs:** India imports over 85% of crude and more than 50% of gas. In FY2023-24, oil and gas were ~\$170 billion of \$677 billion imports, hurting forex and the trade balance.
- 2. Risk magnified by supplier concentration:** Russia now supplies ~35%–40% of crude in 2024-25 (vs ~2% pre-war). Reliance on one partner raises vulnerability; diversification preserves sovereignty.
- 3. Risk amplified by geopolitics:** In June 2025, a wider Israel–Iran war could have threatened over 20 mb/d and pushed Brent past \$103 within days—showing route risk.

What have recent shocks taught the world?

- 1. Single-source strategies fail:** The 1973 embargo quadrupled prices and spurred reserves and diversified sourcing. In 2022, Europe's >40% gas reliance on Russia collapsed, spiking LNG and reviving coal.
- 2. Perceptions reshape emissions paths:** Fukushima (2011) triggered a nuclear pullback; coal and gas filled the gap, raising emissions. Reliability needs are now reviving nuclear.
- 3. Cost-only design breaks under stress:** The Texas Freeze (2021) froze pipelines and stalled turbines. The 2025 Iberian blackout showed renewables-heavy grids without firm backup and inertia can fail.

What is energy realism?

- 1. Transition is a pathway, not a switch:** Energy realism enables transition by sequencing it. Security planning must guide climate goals, not follow them.
- 2. Fossils still dominate demand:** Over 80% of global primary energy is fossil-based. More than 90% of transport runs on hydrocarbons. Solar and wind remain under 10% of the global mix.
- 3. Investment shortfalls tighten supply:** Exploration spending has fallen while demand stays high. The market is structurally tight and vulnerable to small shocks.

What are the five pillars of India's energy sovereignty?

- 1. Coal gasification to unlock indigenous energy:** India has ~150 billion tonnes of coal. High ash content made it unattractive. Advances in gasification and carbon capture can convert this coal into syngas, methanol, hydrogen, and fertilisers. The task is to beat the ash barrier with innovation and scale.

2. Biofuels for rural empowerment and savings: Ethanol blending cuts imports and has transferred over ₹92,000 crore to farmers. SATAT's CBG plants supply clean fuel and bio-manure with 20%–25% organic carbon. This can help restore North India's soils (now ~0.5% vs a healthy 2.5%) and improve water and fertiliser retention, cutting runoff and pollution.

3. Nuclear as zero-carbon baseload: India's 8.8 GW nuclear base must grow. Revive the thorium roadmap, secure uranium, and localise SMRs to provide a dispatchable backbone.

4. Green hydrogen must be sovereign: India targets five million metric tonnes a year by 2030. This requires localised electrolyser manufacturing, catalyst development, and storage systems. The aim is not just green hydrogen—it is **sovereign** hydrogen with control over the full chain.

5. Pumped hydro supplies grid inertia: Pumped hydro is durable and proven. It balances the grid and provides the inertia that wind- and solar-heavy systems lack. India should use its topography to build large-scale storage as the stability backbone for high renewable penetration.

What strategic shift is underway—and what next?

1. Diversification beyond West Asia: Crude from West Asia fell from over 60% to below 45%, as per S&P Global Commodities at Sea. This reflects a deliberate sourcing shift.

2. Use the ceasefire window: The Israel–Iran ceasefire offers time to act without scars. Deepen diversification and resilience now.

3. Redefining power: The century will favour nations that can secure, store, and sustain energy. The five pillars form India's sovereign spine. Build uninterrupted, affordable, indigenous energy—before the next crisis arrives.

Question for practice:

Examine why India's high energy import dependence is a national risk and how the five-pillar strategy aims to build sovereignty and resilience.