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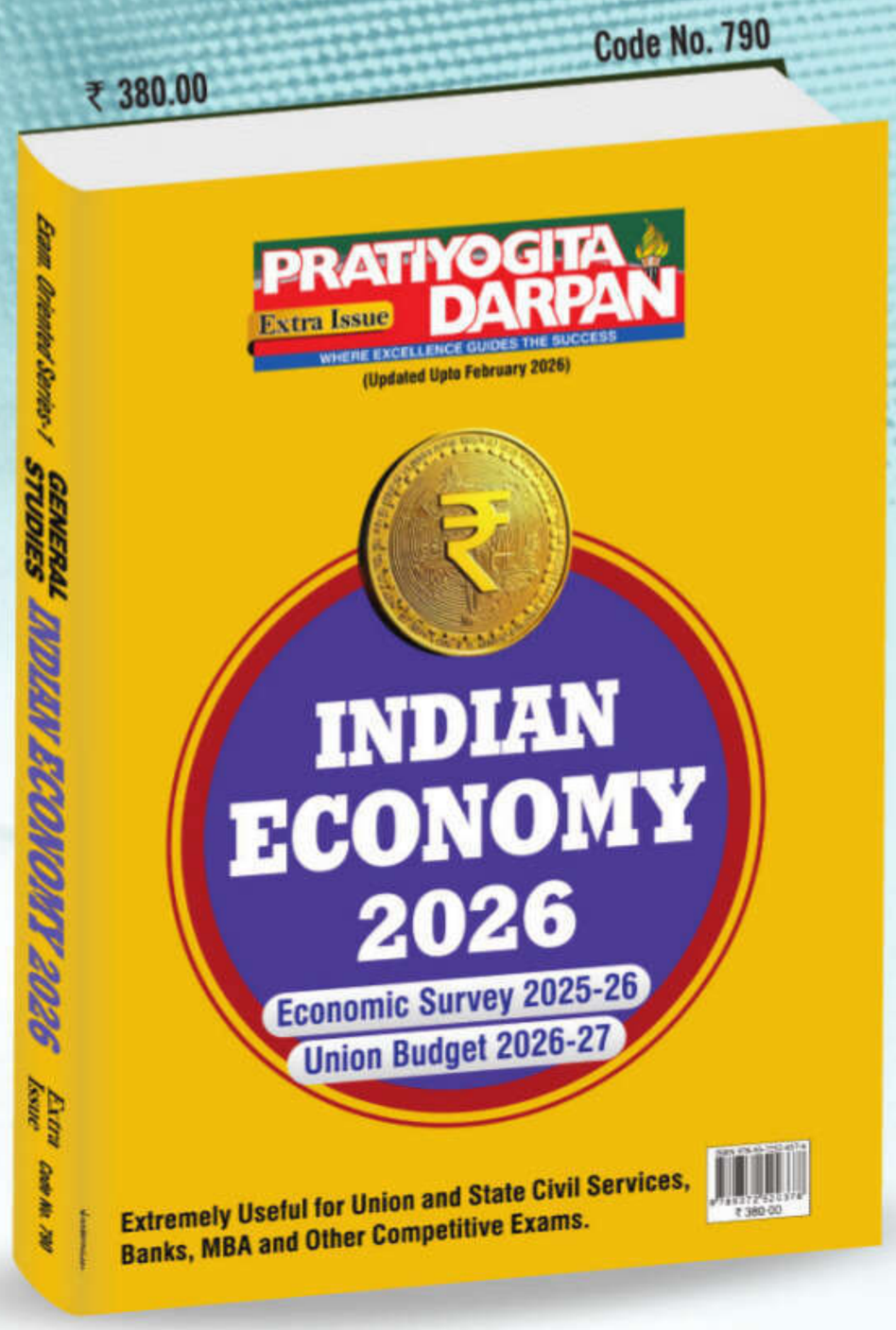
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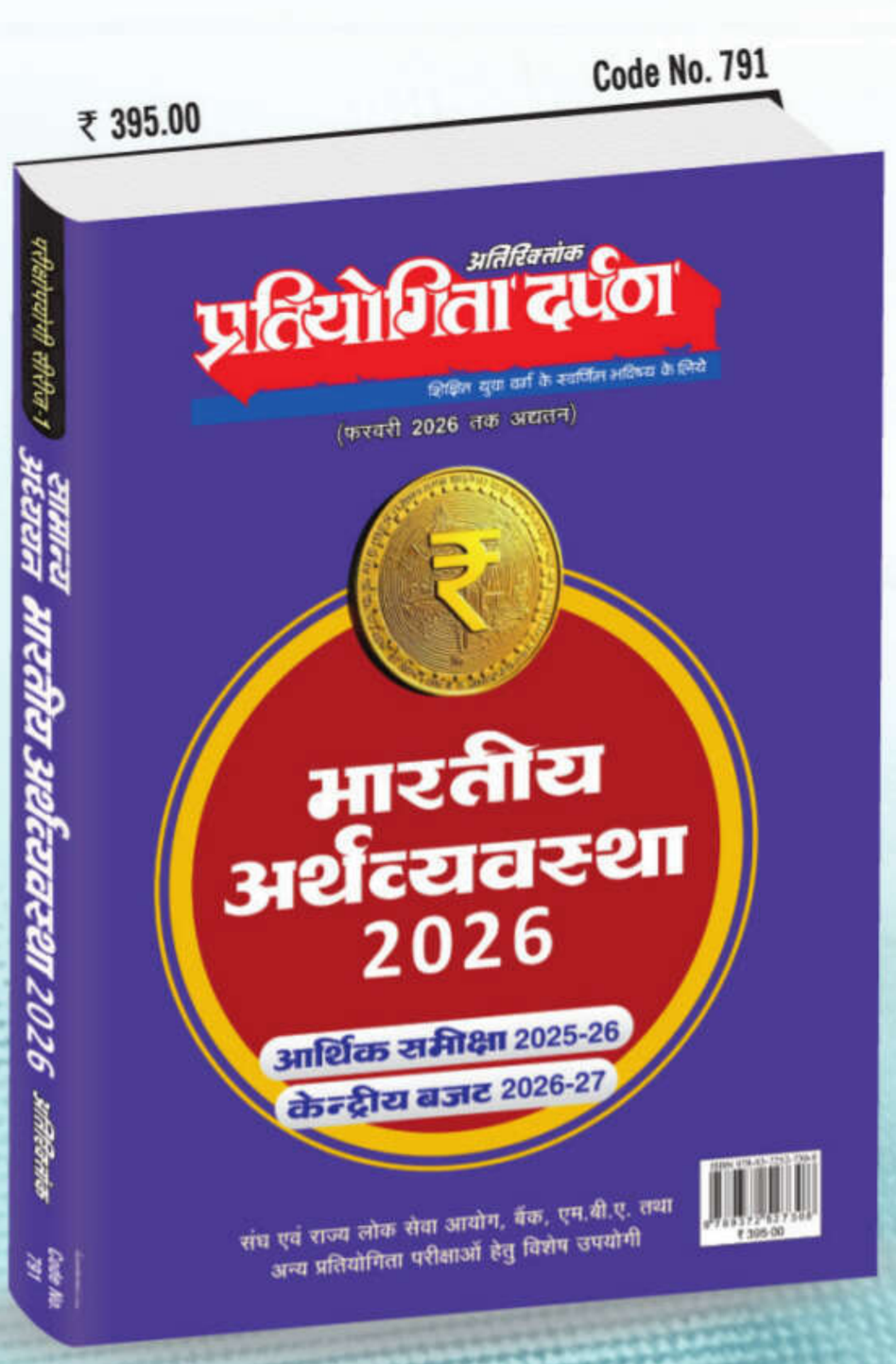
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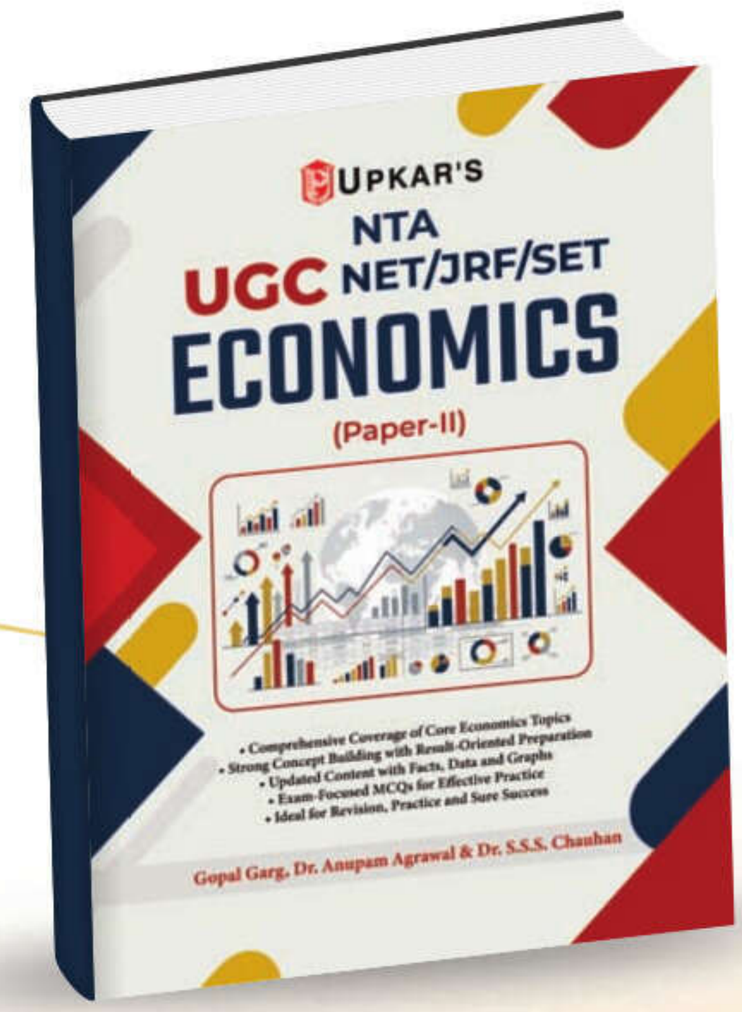
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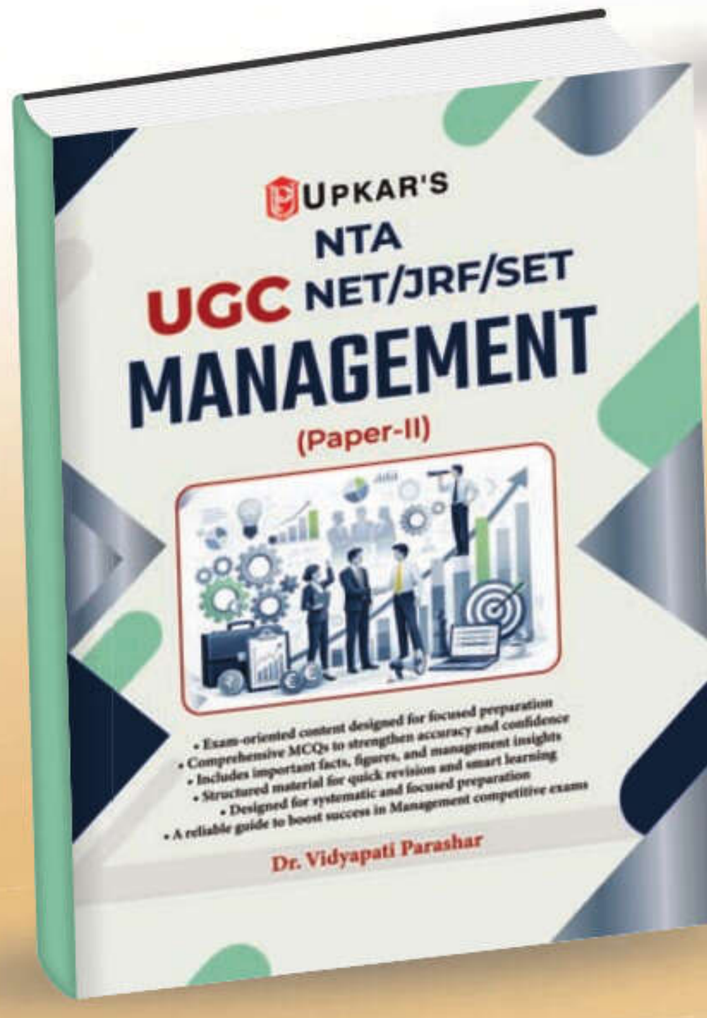
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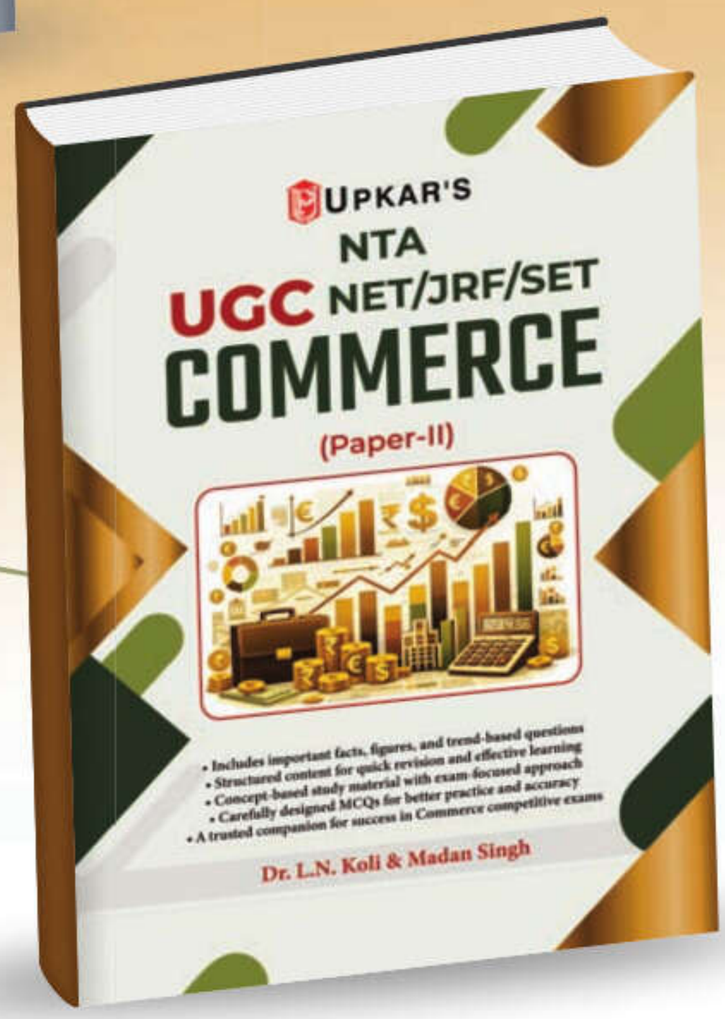


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To Our Readers

Dear Readers,

It is with a sense of great delight and pleasure that we are presenting the May 2026 issue of your favourite magazine **Pratiyogita Darpan.** As usual, present issue of the magazine contains useful materials relevant for competitive examinations. Our editorial board and the team of highly qualified and experienced authors take painstaking efforts to present the study material, keeping in view the requirements of our esteemed readers. We are sure that if you read it intelligently and wisely, it will go a long way in equipping you with knowledge to face the gruelling battle of the examination and bring you the desired success.

We always try to understand the demands and requirements of our readers, their suggestions and changes in the pattern and content of the competitive examinations. We make all efforts to include them, as far as possible, in successive issues of the magazine. It gives us great satisfaction to know that our readers have unanimously endorsed the utility of this magazine.

In the present issue, a number of core articles on important national and international events, contributed by reputed authors, have been given. Some of the representative articles in this present issue are : Jal Jeevan Mission 2·0, Defence Forces Vision 2047, 'Dolphin Hunter' INS Anjadip Commissioned, Census 2027 Mascots 'Pragati' and 'Vikas' Unveiled, India and Finland Bilateral Ties Elevated to Strategic Partnership, India and Canada Launch CEPA Negotiations, 98th Academy Awards, India Ranked 116th in the World Happiness Report 2026, India Wins Its Third ICC Men's T20 World Cup Title, Van Allen Probe A, Seventh National Report on Biological Diversity, First Advance Estimates of Horticulture Crops for Crop Year 2025-26, Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions-2·0 (CGSMFI-2·0), Second Advance Estimates of Production of Major Agriculture Crops (Kharif and Rabi) for 2025-26.

The most important section of the Magazine contains a number of question papers selected from various competitive examinations. They have been solved with relevant hints in short, but clear-cut explanations. All efforts are made to provide error-free solutions. A careful study of and practice session with these papers will be very useful to face any competitive examination.

The columns **Compendium, Test Your Knowledge, Memorable Points** and **Concentric Quiz** have been widely appreciated as trusted tools for the benefit of our readers. An intelligent study and memorizing of their content will be highly useful in solving questions in any future examination.

You will also get the questions based on the Gist of Essential Magazines and their solutions based on the pattern of UPSC Main exam. With these questions, you can find the QR code which can be scanned to download the complete Gist.

Pratiyogita Darpan gives you the best guidance and reading material. It is upto you to make the best use of it for a bright success in any competitive examination.

Read Pratiyogita Darpan regularly and intelligently. It gives you the power to master your career and shape your destiny.

With best wishes for your brilliant success and bright future.

Sincerely yours,

RAHUL JAIN
(Editor)

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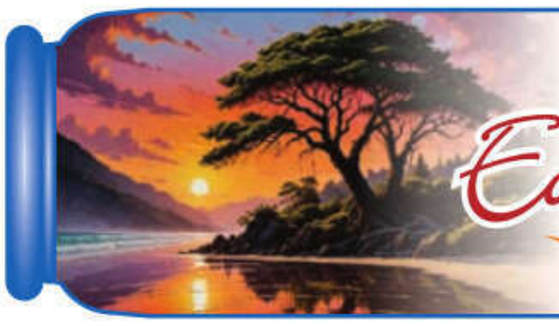
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Editorial

Hear the Whispers of Nature

The best cure for all our ills in life is living in full harmony with Nature. While the prolonged interaction with human beings may be boring and fatiguing, interaction with nature, watching its scenes and sights, observing the various activities of the flora and fauna are refreshing and invigorating to the human soul. Nature teaches us as nothing else can. As Wordsworth says, "One impulse from vernal wood may teach you more……than all the sages can." There is music in Nature which a sensitive ear can well hear. Even the silence in Nature teaches us very precious lessons. Return to Nature, if you wish to lead a healthy and happy life. Hear the whispers of nature with a sensitive soul and a finer sense of perception. All good is hidden in Nature. All that we need to do is to respond to what it messages to us in silence.

We get delighted and feel fresh in the crowd of trees, and feel depressed and uneasy in a crowd of men. We like to live with the trees as long as possible, but want to get away from the crowd at the earliest moment. Trees are really our dear companions. As a matter of fact, the dust-free open atmosphere is very refreshing. Who won't long to be in the lap of nature ? The forests, trees, plants with their fragrance-spreading and multi-coloured flowers and the ripe sweet-smelling fruits hanging from their branches are soothing to the eyes and instill in us a sense of health and vigour. The melodious musical voices of the birds on the trees pour nectar into our ears, which we never want to part away with. It seems that the company of nature in general and of the trees in particular, is nearer to man than the company of his counterparts. Premchand, the celebrated Hindi novelist, has mentioned that idealism in literature has the same place as the open space of nature in life. When we get sick of the suffocating atmosphere of the city life, we go out in the open air to relieve boredom of life. When we are sick of reading the painful and hard realities of life, we take recourse to some sort of idealism which takes the reader to a higher plane of consciousness. Enjoyment of poetry takes the reader beyond the bonds of 'I' and I'ness.

Nature is the art of God, and it was she who gave birth to art, as the great thinkers and philosophers like Aristotle and Plato defined "art as nothing but nature's imitation." Even today painters and poets get new ideas from nature. As William Shakespeare wrote in one of his dramas—"that the poem hangs on the berry bush, when comes the poet's eye. The seven notes of music are based on and named after the different melodies in the realm of nature."

Every event in natures takes place under a law and all movements are rhythmic. The branch of scientific knowledge known as physics is but an humble effort of bringing to light the laws of nature. The codes of human conduct were made so that the man could live in harmony with nature.

Nature is a lesson in discipline, she teaches men how to lead a disciplined life and round up his or her angularities so that human life be made a school of development, progress and evolution. For example, the cycle of seasons follows a definite time table and there is no possibility for acts of commission and omission. The sun and the moon come and go under a certain mathematical rule. Don't they point out to us the important place of regularity and punctuality ? Those who have missed their trains by being late a minute, will realize the value of punctuality. Have we ever thought what would happen in case some day the Sun did not appear at the scheduled time, or the eclipse continued longer than scheduled ?

There is no vacuum or fraud in nature. The law of cause and effect and principle of 'as you sow, so you reap' works incessantly and unhampered in nature.

We complain of disturbances and irregularities of weather. We also see that weather forecasts prove wrong quite often. The reason therefore is obvious. Men have polluted the whole atmosphere by his indiscriminate actions and thoughts. The immutable law of cause and effect is there to tell us the untoward effects produced by the thoughts of deceit, malice, jealousy and enmity. Men must learn to follow the rules of conduct which have been drafted under the inspiration of the laws of nature. You must know that nature is the unfathomable ocean of inexhaustible knowledge and the repository of wisdom. To those, who have ears to hear, every leaf has something to give and every particle of dust has the potency of releasing immense energy. As the great scientist and propounder of the Theory of Special Relativity, Albert Einstein writes that "to get the best out of himself and inspiration from nature one has to develop the inner man in obedience to the laws of nature and follow her dictates."

The waves of the sea dash against the projecting rock day and night and scatter away. The rock teaches us the lesson to remain firm at the place of your duty and assignment. The difficulties will dash and scatter like the waves of the raging sea.

Have faith in nature and confidence in yourself, hear the message which nature gives in its silent voice, you will get the desired direction to follow to achieve success.

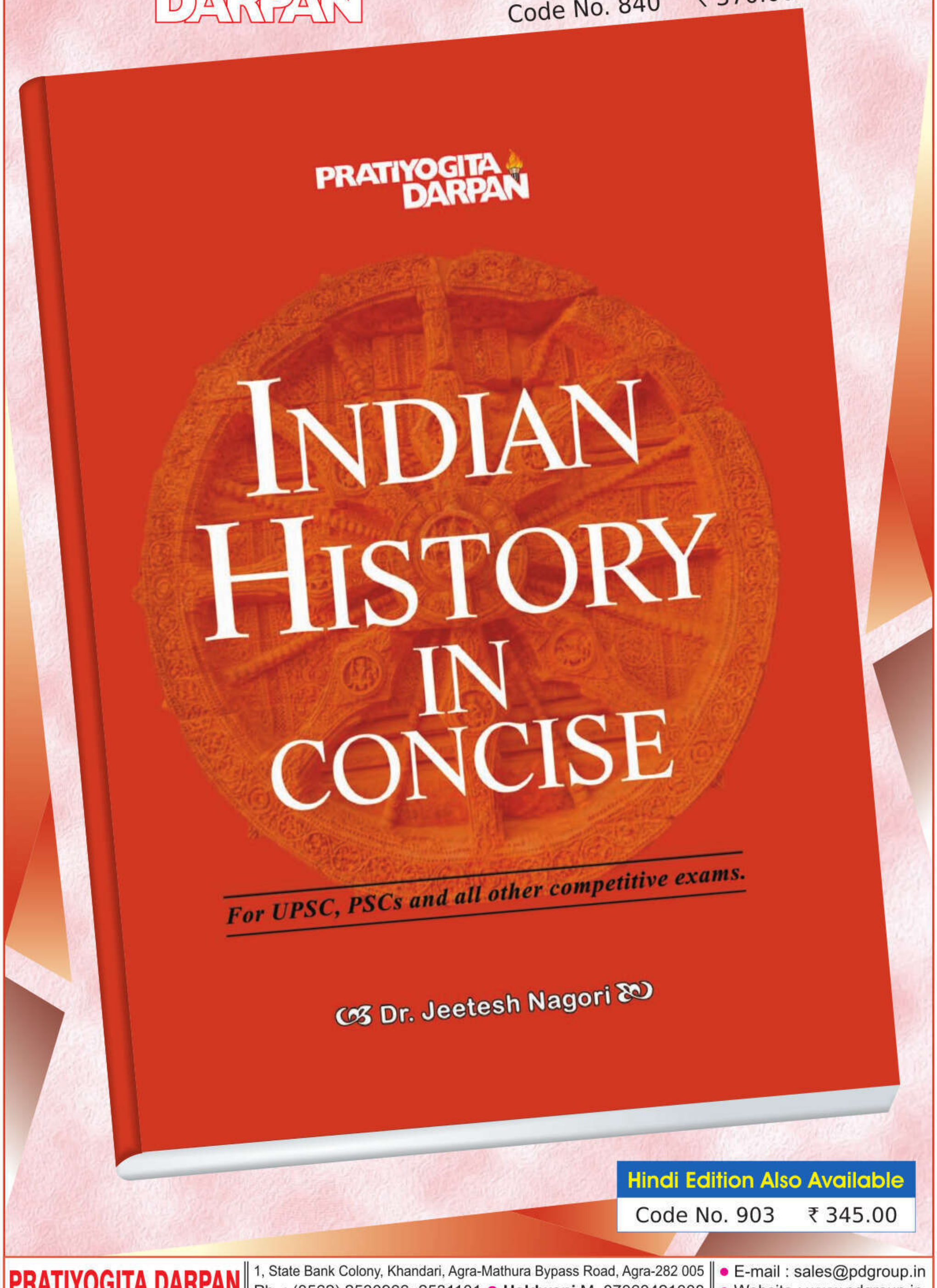
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Nation This Month

- *Union Cabinet Approves Jal Jeevan Mission 2·0*
- *PM Modi Becomes Longest-Serving Elected Head of Government in India*
- *Scheduled Caste Status Only for Hindus, Sikhs or Buddhists*
- *Passive Euthanasia*
- *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026*
- *Defence Forces Vision 2047*
- *Union Defence Ministry Signs Deals Worth ₹ 5,083 Crore to Boost Maritime Security*
- *'Dolphin Hunter' INS Anjadip Commissioned*
- *Exercise Vajra Prahar 2026*
- *4,323 Cases of Drone Sightings Along India's Border in Last Five Years*
- *Supreme Court Allows 12 Weeks' Paid Leave to All New Adoptive Mothers*
- *Parental Income Alone cannot Decide OBC Creamy Layer Status*
- *Supreme Court Nod Must for Delay in Choosing State DGPs*
- *Census 2027 Mascots 'Pragati' and 'Vikas' Unveiled*
- *India Sustains Progress in Reducing Child Deaths Amid Slowing Global Gains*
- *Nationwide HPV Vaccination Drive Launched from Ajmer*
- *Lancet Study Warns of Sharp Rise in Breast Cancer Cases in India*
- *India is the 6th Most Polluted Country in the World*
- *India Ranks Second Globally for Children who are Overweight and Obese*
- *Indian Railways Launch 'SHINE' to Empower Women at Workplace*

Union Cabinet Approves Jal Jeevan Mission 2·0

On March 10, 2026, the Union Cabinet approved the Ministry of Jal Shakti's proposal to restructure and reorient the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) from infrastructure creation to a service delivery, supported by drinking water governance and institutional ecosystem for sustainable rural piped potable water supply. Since its inception in 2019, household tap water connections increased nearly five-fold, rising from 323·6 lakh to 1,582·3 lakh, which brought rural coverage to over 81 per cent by February 2026.

Key Highlights :

- The Cabinet has approved the enhancement of total outlay to ₹ 8·69 lakh crore with total central assistance of ₹ 3·59 lakh crore enhancing from ₹ 2·08 lakh crore approved in 2019-20 *i.e.*, additional central share of ₹ 1·51 lakh crore.
- A uniform national digital framework, namely 'Sujalam Bharat', shall be instituted, under which every village shall be assigned a unique Sujal Gaon / Service Area ID, digitally mapping the complete drinking water supply system from source to tap.
- For ensuring transparency and accountability the involvement of GPs and VWSCs in the commissioning and formal handover of schemes through 'Jal Arpan'.
- A Gram Panchayat shall certify completion of works and declare itself 'Har Ghar Jal' only upon confirmation that adequate in-village operation and maintenance mechanisms have been established by the State Government.
- Recognizing that community ownership and participation are critical for operational efficiency and source sustainability, the programme shall promote 'Jal Utsav' as an annual, community-led maintenance and review event, integrating local cultural ethos while reinforcing collective responsibility for drinking water secure future.
- JJM 2·0 would facilitate the certification of all Gram Panchayats as 'Har Ghar Jal', by provisioning tap water connection to all the 19·36 crore rural households across the country by December 2028.

Key Reform Areas Highlighted Under JJM 2·0 Include :

- Assured service delivery with defined performance standards.
- Clear accountability at State, district and Gram Panchayat levels.
- Long-term sustainability through source protection, water conservation and community ownership.

According to Parliamentary Committee, sustainable sources of water supply is essential for providing potable water supply to all rural household under Jal Jeevan Mission. For this, the committee recommends implement 'source to tap' schemes, under which the entire chain of water supply such as the source of water, tank, supply, were accounted for.

PM Modi Becomes Longest-Serving Elected Head of Government in India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has achieved a historic milestone in Indian politics by becoming the longest-serving head of an elected government in the country. With this, PM Modi has surpassed Pawan Kumar Chamling,

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who held office as Chief Minister of Sikkim for 8,930 days. He has now completed 8,931 days as head of government, combining his tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat and as Prime Minister, thereby entering his 25th year in a leadership role.

PM Modi first assumed office as Chief Minister of Gujarat on October 7, 2001 and continued in the role until May 21, 2014. He was sworn in as the 14th Prime Minister of India on May 26, 2014, becoming the first non-Congress leader to secure a full majority in the Lok Sabha. He later became the first non-Congress Prime Minister to complete two full terms in office and return for a third consecutive term.

PM Modi has set several notable records, including being the longest-serving Chief Minister of Gujarat and the Prime Minister with the longest prior experience as a CM. He is also the first Prime Minister of India to have been born after Independence and has secured victory in three consecutive Lok Sabha elections in 2014, 2019 and 2024.

PM Modi has crossed several other significant benchmarks this year, particularly in the digital domain. In March 2026, he reached 30 million subscribers on his YouTube channel, strengthening his position as one of the most-followed global leaders on the platform. In February 2026, PM Modi also crossed 100 million followers on Instagram, becoming the first serving world leader and politician to achieve the milestone on the platform.

Scheduled Caste Status Only for Hindus, Sikhs or Buddhists

On March 24, 2026, the Supreme Court bench of Justices P.K. Mishra and Manmohan held that that the Scheduled Caste status is available only to Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. The Court also clarified that conversion to any other religion, such as Christianity, results in the immediate and complete loss of Scheduled Caste status, regardless of birth.

Key Highlights of the Judgement :

- According to the Supreme Court, the restriction under Clause 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, is absolute, that any person who professes a religion other than Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism ceases to qualify as a member of a Scheduled Caste, irrespective of their birth. The two positions are mutually exclusive and contrary to the Constitutional scheme.
- The Court further ruled that that a Dalit individual who converts to Christianity (in present case) cannot claim protection under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.
- According to the Court, the term 'profess' in Clause 3 of the 1950 Order requires an outward manifestation of one's faith. The Court also ruled that Christianity does not recognize or incorporate the caste system.
- On the issue of reconversion to Hindu, Buddhist or Sikh religion, the top court ruled that the individual must conclusively prove his earlier caste, must provide credible and unimpeachable proof of his bona fide reconversion and must show satisfactory evidence of his acceptance and assimilation in his earlier caste.
- The reconversion to earlier religion should translate to the actual adoption and observance of the customs, usages, practices, rituals and religious obligations of the original caste. Failure to establish even one condition renders the claim of re-conversion unsustainable, the court cautioned.

- The Clause 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, originally mandated that "no person who professes a religion different from Hinduism shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste". The Sikh religion was added to the ambit of Clause 3 in 1956. The provision was further amended in 1990 to include persons professing Buddhism.
- The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, do not prescribe religion-based exclusion as in the case of the Scheduled Caste community. However, the Supreme Court has ruled that a person could claim benefits under it, only if he or she continued to belong to that particular tribe 'in substance'.

Passive Euthanasia

On March 24, 2026, Harish Rana, India's first person to be allowed passive euthanasia, passed away in AIIMS-Delhi. On March 11, 2026, the Supreme Court in its first-ever order allowing passive euthanasia, had allowed the withdrawal of artificial life support to Harish Rana, a 32-year-old who has been in a persistent vegetative state, following a head injury in 2013.

Understanding Euthanasia

- Euthanasia, derived from the Greek words 'eu' and 'Thanatos', implies intentional acceleration of the death of a terminally ill patient to relieve the patient from unbearable pain or suffering.
- Active Euthanasia (also known as Passive Euthanasia) involves a deliberate and overt act—such as the administration of a lethal injection—intended to directly cause or accelerate death. India does not allow active euthanasia.
- Passive Euthanasia (also known as Negative Euthanasia) involves the withdrawal or withholding of life-sustaining medical treatments, such as ventilators or feeding tubes, that would otherwise preserve or prolong a patient's life. In voluntary passive euthanasia, consent of the patient is available, whereas, in non-voluntary passive euthanasia, the consent of the patient is not available.
- The recent Supreme Court judgement in Harish Rana addresses non-voluntary passive euthanasia. This applies to 'incompetent' patients who lack the capacity to provide consent or make informed decisions—such as those in a Persistent Vegetative State (PVS), an irreversible coma, or those of unsound mind.

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Jurisprudential Evolution of Passive Euthanasia in India

- The Supreme Court in *Gian Kaur Vs. State of Punjab (1996)* had held that the 'right to life' under Article 21 did not include a 'right to die'. It emphasized the preservation of life.
- The 196th Law Commission report (2006) argued that refusing medical treatment that merely prolongs the process of dying is a 'lawful omission'. The 241st Law Commission Report (2012) supported passive euthanasia on humanitarian grounds and to protect doctors acting in a patient's best interest.
- The Supreme Court in *Aruna Ramachandra Shanbaug Vs. Union of India* (2011) officially recognized passive euthanasia as legal under strict judicial supervision.
- In *Common Cause Vs. Union of India* (2018) case, the Supreme Court's Constitution Bench of five judges had held that the right to die with dignity is a facet of the right to life and liberty under Article 21.
- In Common Cause case, the Supreme Court also laid down guidelines detailing procedures, including Constitution of medical boards, to deal with applications for withdrawal of life support and advanced medical directives (AMDs). In 2023, the Supreme Court simplified the procedure of AMDs.

Harish Rana Case

- In the present case, the Court stated that any withholding of treatment should be carried out in a manner that is humane—it should not result in an 'abandonment' of the patient.
- The apex Court clarified that in the judgement, 'Euthanasia' will refer strictly to active euthanasia, which remains impermissible; 'Withdrawing or Withholding of Medical Treatment' will replace the term passive euthanasia.
- Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH) constitutes 'medical treatment' and must be governed by the same legal principles applicable to the withholding or withdrawal of other forms of life-sustaining medical intervention.
- In Common Cause (2018), the Supreme Court had ruled that the 'best interest of patient' must be kept in mind, which overrides State's interest too. The Court had also held that determining 'best interest' is on the doctors and the courts. However, in Harish Rana case, the Supreme Court held that the 'best interest' principle required a holistic assessment of both medical and non-medical factors.
- The Court emphasised that the withdrawal or withholding of medical treatment must be effected through a structured and humane process, accompanied by a palliative and EOL care plan.

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026

On March 25, 2026, the Parliament passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, which aims to amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the Bill as on March 30, 2026.

Key Highlights of the Act :

- The Act proposes to remove transgender people's right to a self-perceived gender identity and limit the definition of transgender person to people with biological or physiological markers or people belonging to socio-cultural identities.
- Under the Act, a transgender person may apply to the District Magistrate for issuing a certificate of identity as a transgender person. The Act further adds that the District Magistrate will issue the certificate after examining the recommendation of a designated medical board. The board will be headed by a Chief Medical Officer or a Deputy Chief Medical Officer.
- The Act also provides that transgender persons will be entitled to change the first name in the birth certificate and other official documents based on the certificate of identity.
- Offences against transgender persons include : (i) compelling or enticing into forced or bonded labour, (ii) denying the right of passage or obstructing use of public place, (iii) forcing or causing to leave household, village, or other places of residence and (iv) harm or injury. These are punishable with imprisonment between six months and two years and a fine.
- Kidnapping and causing grievous hurt or severe injury in order to force a person to assume a transgender identity will carry : (i) imprisonment between 10 years and life and a minimum fine of ₹ 2 lakh if the victim is an adult and (ii) imprisonment for life and a fine of at least ₹ 5 lakh if the victim is a child.
- Forcing a person to present as a transgender person and engage in begging, servitude or bonded labour will be punishable with : (i) imprisonment between 5 and 10 years and a fine of at least ₹ 1 lakh, if the victim is an adult, and (ii) imprisonment between 10 and 14 years and a fine of at least ₹ 3 lakh if the victim is a child.

Defence Forces Vision 2047

On March 10, 2026, Union Defence Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh, unveiled 'Defence Forces Vision 2047 : A Roadmap for a Future-Ready Indian Military' a comprehensive blueprint has been articulated by Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff to transform the Defence Forces into a modern, integrated and technologically-advanced military capable of supporting India's aspiration to become Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Key Takeaways

- Strategic reforms, capability enhancements and organisational changes required within the Defence Forces to effectively address the evolving geostrategic, technological & security environment.
- Transformation of the military into an integrated, multi-domain and agile force which is capable of deterring adversaries, responding across the full spectrum of conflict & protecting expanding strategic interests, amid the rapidly changing global and regional dynamics.

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Key Highlights :

- Jointness and synergy among all the Defence Services is central pillar of the Vision 2047, aiming to promote greater coordination in planning, operations & capability development.
- For building a Force that is adaptable to future warfare challenges, the document outlines the importance of innovation, advanced technologies and modern training framework.
- The document envisages development & adoption of indigenous technologies and solutions tailored to the country's unique security requirements. For this, the emphasis is on Atmanirbharta in defence, which aims to strengthen domestic defence manufacturing and technological capabilities. It will accelerate operational readiness while contributing to national growth.
- The capability goals have been prioritized across short-term, mid-term and long-term timelines. This structured approach will guide the development of critical military capabilities, institutional reforms and strategic partnerships required to build a world class defence force.
- The Whole-of-Nation approach has been emphasized to deal with the complexity of future challenges. The approach outlines integrating military strength with diplomatic, technological and economic power to ensure national security.
- Through sustained reforms, innovation and national commitment, it aims to ensure that by the centenary of India's independence, the nation's military stand as a globally-respected, technologically-advanced and combat-ready military, contributing to a strong and resilient Viksit Bharat.

Union Defence Ministry Signs Deals Worth ₹ 5,083 Crore to Boost Maritime Security

On March 3, 2026, the Union Defence Ministry signed contracts worth ₹ 5,083 crore for the acquisition of six Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III (Maritime Role) for the Indian Coast Guard and Surface-to-Air Vertical Launch – Shtil missiles for the Indian Navy.

ALH Mk-III

- The contract for the six ALH Mk-III (MR) choppers, along with operational role equipment, an engineering support package and performance-based logistics support, valued at ₹ 2,901 crore, has been signed with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bengaluru. The purchase comes under the category of indigenously designed, developed and manufactured products.
- The twin-engine ALH Mk-III helicopters incorporate state-of-the-art features superior to the airborne platforms currently in operation and are capable of undertaking a wide spectrum of maritime security missions from shore-based airfields as well as from ships at sea.
- Their induction is expected to significantly enhance the Indian Coast Guard's capability to ensure the safety and protection of artificial islands, offshore installations and fishermen.
- The project envisages supply of equipment from more than 200 MSMEs and is expected to generate approximately 65 lakh man-hours of employment.

Shtil Missiles

- The contract for the procurement of Surface-to-Air Vertical Launch–Shtil missiles and associated missile holding frames, valued at ₹ 2,182 crore, has been signed with JSC Rosoboronexport, a state-run company of the Russian Federation.
- The acquisition is aimed at substantially enhancing the air defence capabilities of frontline warships against a wide spectrum of aerial threats.
- The system will bolster the layered air defence architecture onboard Indian Navy platforms by providing rapid-reaction, all-weather engagement capability and improved survivability in contested maritime environments.
- The contract underscores the longstanding defence partnership between India and Russia, built on mutual trust and strategic alignment.

Additionally, a contract for the construction of 04 X 500T Self Propelled Fuel Barges for the Navy has been signed with M/s Shoft Shipyard Private Limited, Thane. The primary role of these barges will be the replenishment of fuel to ships and submarines in harbour and at anchorage.

'Dolphin Hunter' INS Anjadip Commissioned

On February 27, 2026, the Indian Navy commissioned its third indigenously designed and built *Arnala-class* Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC) INS Anjadip at Chennai Port. It was commissioned by the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, in the presence of senior naval officials. INS Anjadip is named after the historical island off the coast of Karwar.

Key Highlights :

- Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, Anjadip is a state-of-the-art vessel specifically designed to address the challenges of the littoral combat environment—the coastal and shallow waters vital for the nation's security.
- INS *Anjadip* is the third Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) corvette of *Arnala-class* to be commissioned into the Indian Navy, following the commissioning of INS Arnala and INS Androth last year.
- The vessel is engineered to act as a 'Dolphin Hunter', focussed on the detection, tracking and neutralisation of enemy submarines in coastal areas. The ship is packed with an indigenous, cutting-edge Anti-Submarine Warfare weapons and sensor package, including the Hull Mounted Sonar Abhay and armed with Lightweight Torpedoes and ASW Rockets.

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- In addition to its primary ASW role, the agile and highly manoeuvrable warship is also equipped to undertake Coastal Surveillance, Low-Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO) and Search & Rescue operations.
- The 77 meter-long ship, features a high-speed Water-Jet Propulsion system, enabling it to achieve a top speed of 25 knots for rapid response and sustained operations.
- The ship is equipped with a modern ASW suite and an integrated advanced Combat Management System to effectively detect, track and neutralise sub-surface threats.

In November 2025, the Indian Navy commissioned INS Mahe, the first of the Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC), at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. Hence, INS *Anjadip* is the fourth ASW-SWC to be commissioned by the Indian Navy. The ASW-SWC corvettes are being built indigenously to replace the Navy's aging Abhay-class vessels.

Exercise Vajra Prahar 2026

The 16th edition of the India–US Joint Special Forces Exercise Vajra Prahar was conducted at the Special Forces Training School in Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh, from February 24 to March 16, 2026. The Indian Army was represented by 45 personnel drawn from its Special Forces units, while the United States fielded 12 personnel from the Green Berets of the US Special Forces. The previous edition of the exercise was held at the Orchard Combat Training Centre in Idaho, United States, in November 2024.

The aim of the exercise was to strengthen joint operational capabilities and promote mutual understanding through the exchange of special operations tactics, techniques and procedures. The training focussed on a high degree of physical conditioning, joint mission planning and the execution of joint tactical drills. Participating troops shared best practices and operational experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and special operations tactics, techniques and procedures.

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu undertook a sortie in the indigenous Light Combat Helicopter PRACHAND at Air Force Station Jaisalmer, Rajasthan on February 27, 2026. Earlier, she undertook sorties in Sukhoi 30 MKI and Rafale in 2023 and 2025, respectively. The sortie coincided with Vayu Shakti 2026, during which the Indian Air Force showcased its precision-targeting capabilities at the Pokhran Range.

4,323 Cases of Drone Sightings Along India's Border in Last Five Years

According to the information provided by the Union Home Ministry to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, in the past five years, about two-three drones were sighted every day and at least one drone incursion was reported each day along India's international borders.

Key Facts :

- During the last five years, 4,323 cases of drone sightings were reported. However, 967 cases of drone incursions occurred, which were intercepted or neutralised, resulting in the seizure of 710 ammunitions, 75 arms and 641 kg of drugs.
- Drone sightings are a regular phenomenon along the Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir borders with Pakistan.
- The 257th Demands for Grants (2026-27) report of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs recommended counter-drone capabilities, including detection, neutralisation and forensic analysis, be further strengthened through induction of advanced technologies and enhanced inter-agency coordination mechanisms.
- Border Guarding Forces face complex operational challenges arising from rugged mountains, dense forests, riverine and marshy stretches, unfenced gaps, habitation near the zero line and adverse weather conditions such as fog, heavy rainfall and extreme temperatures.
- After Operation Sindoor on May 7, 2025, several incidents of cross-border shelling were reported in the border districts of J&K and Punjab. A total of 9,663 bunkers have been constructed in border areas of J&K at a cost of ₹ 357·40 crores to provide protection to civilians during cross-border shelling.

Supreme Court Allows 12 Weeks' Paid Leave to All New Adoptive Mothers

On March 17, 2026, the Supreme Court ruled that adoptive mothers could avail themselves of 12 weeks of paid maternity leave regardless of the age of their children at the time of adoption. The apex court held that that an adoptive mother had the same rights and obligations towards the child as a biological mother.

Key Highlights :

- The Supreme Court striked down Section 60(4) of the Social Security Code, 2020 (previously Section 5(4) of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961), which limited this benefit only to mothers who adopted children under the age of three months.
- The Supreme Court also asked the Centre to come out with a provision recognising paternity leave as a social security benefit.
- The Supreme Court's judgement came on a plea challenging Section 60(4) of the Social Security Code, 2020, which allows 12 weeks of maternity leave only if an adoptive mother adopts a child below three months of age.

Delay in Adoption Key Factor for Supreme Court Ruling

- A key factor in the ruling was the practical difficulty of adopting very young infants under India's legal framework.
- The court pointed out that by the time a child is legally declared free for adoption, it is unlikely to be under three months old, rendering the provision ineffective.

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- The bench emphasised that the best interests of the child must guide policy, noting that integration into an adoptive family requires time, care and bonding beyond the formal act of adoption.

Parental Income Alone cannot Decide OBC Creamy Layer Status

On March 11, 2026, the Supreme Court ruled that income cannot be the sole criterion to decide the creamy layer among Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and settled the long-pending question of equivalence between PSUs and private sector employees and those in the government sector.

Key Highlights of the Judgement :

- Creamy layer exclusion criteria are status-based rather than purely income-based.
- Treating the children of those employed in PSUs or private employment, etc., as being excluded from the benefit of reservation only on the basis of their income derived from salaries, and without reference to their posts (whether Group A or B, or Group C or D) would certainly lead to hostile discrimination between parties who are similarly placed and would amount to equals being treated unequally.
- The status as well as the category of post to which a candidate's parent or parents belong is essential.
- The 1993 Office Memorandum of the DoPT had declared some OBC families ineligible for reservation benefits on the basis of their occupations. However, it carved out some exceptions such as children of MPs and MLAs; government officials who have been promoted, not hired, into senior positions; and owners of unirrigated agricultural land, among others, are all eligible for OBC quotas, subject to a parental annual income limit of ₹ 8 lakh.
- The top court observed that DoPT's 1993 OM makes it clear that salary income and agricultural income are consciously kept outside the common pool while determining exclusion under the Income / Wealth Test.
- The Supreme Court ruled that determination of creamy layer status solely on the basis of income brackets, without reference to the categories of posts and status parameters enunciated in the 1993 OM is clearly unsustainable in law.
- The ruling of the apex court is likely to widen the reservation pool to include the children of senior public sector officials who had earlier been excluded on the basis of their parents' annual salaries being above the ₹ 8 lakh threshold.

On September 8, 1993, the DoPT issued a circular clarifying who is classified as OBC and who belongs to the creamy layer among them. For those in government jobs, the 'creamy layer' specifies groups such as persons occupying constitutional posts; Group-A/Class-I officers of All India Services, Central services and state services; Group-B/Class-II services of Centre and state; employees of PSUs; officers of Armed Forces; professionals and those from trade and industry; property owners; and an income/wealth test. The criterion for those not in the government sector was set at ₹ 1 lakh per annum in 1993. It was revised in due course and since 2017, this income limit is ₹ 8 lakh.

Supreme Court Nod Must for Delay in Choosing State DGPs

Under the revised rules of UPSC for the empanelment of the State Director General of Police and Head of Police Force, State Governments will now have to get the consent of the Supreme Court for any delay in submitting the list of DGP-rank officers to the UPSC for empanelment.

With many States delaying the process of sending proposals for shortlisting the names of three DGPs for the top post for various reasons and some appointing acting DGPs, the UPSC sought legal opinion in the matter.

While disposing of an interlocutory application moved by the Union Home Ministry, the Supreme Court had ruled that States should send their proposals in anticipation of the vacancies to the UPSC well in time – at least three months prior to the date of retirement of the incumbent on the post of DGP. It also ordered that none of the States shall ever conceive of the idea of appointing any person to the post of Director General of Police on an acting basis for there is no concept of an acting Director General of Police as per the decision in Prakash Singh's cases.

Amending its earlier orders, the UPSC said the States shall seek leave or clarification from the Supreme Court for delayed submission except for death, resignation or premature relieving of DGP in accordance with the apex court judgement.

Prakash Singh Judgement (2006) on Police Reforms : In Nutshell

- Constitute a State Security Commission (SSC) to : ensure that the State government does not exercise unwarranted influence or pressure on the police; lay down broad policy guideline and evaluate the performance of the state police.
- Ensure that the DGP is appointed through merit based transparent process and secure a minimum tenure of two years.
- Ensure that other police officers on operational duties (including Superintendents of Police in-charge of a district and Station House Officers in-charge of a police station) are also provided a minimum tenure of two years.
- Separate the investigation and law and order functions of the police.
- Set up a Police Establishment Board (PEB) to decide transfers, postings, promotions and other service-related matters of police officers of and below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police and make recommendations on postings and transfers above the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police.
- Set up a Police Complaints Authority (PCA) at State level to inquire into public complaints.
- Against police officers of and above the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police in cases of serious misconduct.
- Set up a National Security Commission (NSC) at the union level to prepare a panel for selection and placement of Chiefs of the Central Police Organisations (CPO) with a minimum tenure of two years.

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Census 2027 Mascots 'Pragati' and 'Vikas' Unveiled

On March 5, 2026, the Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah unveiled two mascots, 'Pragati' and 'Vikas', for the upcoming Population Census 2027. These mascots also symbolize the equal participation of women and men in fulfilling the resolve to make India a developed nation by 2047. Through these mascots, information, objectives and key messages related to Census 2027 will be disseminated in an effective and citizen-friendly manner across diverse sections of society.

Shri Amit Shah also soft launched four digital tools to be used during the exercise. These four tools are : Houselisting Block Creator (HLBC) Web Application, HLO Mobile Application, Self-Enumeration (SE) Portal and Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) Portal. These portals have been designed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).

About Census 2027 : The Central Government notified its intent to conduct Census 2027 through a Gazette Notification on 16th June, 2025. For the first time, the Census will be conducted digitally and for the first time, the option of Self-Enumeration will be available. Census-2027 will be conducted in 2 phases : Houselisting and Housing Census (HLO) in Phase 1 and Population Enumeration (PE) in Phase 2.

India Sustains Progress in Reducing Child Deaths Amid Slowing Global Gains

According to the UN report titled 'Levels and Trends in Child Mortality,' released on March 18, 2026, sustained public health efforts has led to declining child mortality in India. This progress is anchored in a continuum-of-care strategy that integrates health system strengthening with targeted, demand-driven initiatives such as *Janani Suraksha Yojana* and *Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram*.

At the same time, the expansion of newborn care infrastructure including Special Newborn Care Units along with digital innovations like Tele-SNCU, highlights how strategic investments and coordinated implementation are contributing to improved child survival outcomes across diverse settings.

The report highlights that 'Every dollar invested in child survival can generate up to twenty dollars in social and economic benefits.'

Important Facts about India

- In 1990, India had an NMR of 57 per 1,000 live, which fell to 17 in 2024.
- Under 5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) witnessed a sharp fall in 1990, the U5MR stood at 127 per 1,000 live births, while in 2024 it declined to 27.

World Scenario

- An estimated 4·9 million children died before their fifth birthday in 2024, including 2·3 million newborns. Newborn deaths account for nearly half of all under-five deaths.
- Under-five deaths globally have fallen by more than half since 2000 However, since 2015, the pace of reduction in child mortality has slowed by more than 60 per cent.
- For the first time, the report estimates deaths directly caused by Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), finding that more than 100,000 children aged 1-59 months or 5 per cent – died from it in 2024.
- Malaria remained the single largest killer in this age group (17 per cent) with most deaths occurring in endemic areas of sub-Saharan Africa.
- In Southern Asia, which accounted for 25 per cent of all under-five deaths, mortality was driven largely by complications in the first month of life.

Nationwide HPV Vaccination Drive Launched from Ajmer

On 28 February, 2026, PM Narendra Modi launched the nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Campaign for 14-year-old girls from Ajmer, Rajasthan, marking a historic milestone in India's fight against cervical cancer.

The nationwide HPV vaccination campaign aims to prevent cervical cancer by protecting girls before potential exposure to HPV infection. The vaccine is safe, effective and provides long-lasting protection against HPV strains responsible for the majority of cervical cancer cases. HPV vaccines are 93–100% effective in preventing cervical cancer caused by vaccine-covered HPV types.

Key Highlights :

- India's national programme uses Gardasil-4 (Quadrivalent : HPV types 6, 11, 16, 18) in a single-dose schedule, aligned with global scientific evidence and WHO recommendations.
- The campaign will cover girls aged 14 years (those who have completed 14 years but have not yet completed 15 years).
- After completion of the campaign phase, HPV vaccine will be available on routine immunization session days.
- Vaccination is voluntary, free of cost and will be administered only after parental/guardian consent.
- HPV vaccination has been validated and recommended by global and national expert bodies including the World Health Organization (WHO) and India's National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI).

Cervical Cancer Burden in India

Cervical cancer remains a significant public health concern globally and in India. It is the second most common cancer among women in India, with over 1 lakh 20 thousand new cases and nearly 80 thousand deaths reported annually as per the WHO GLOBOCAN report 2022. Persistent infection with high-risk Human Papillomavirus (HPV) types, particularly types 16 and 18 has been established as the primary cause of cervical cancer.

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Lancet Study Warns of Sharp Rise in Breast Cancer Cases in India

According to the study published in Lancet Oncology, India registered a staggering 477% increase in breast cancer cases and 352% increase in deaths caused by the disease between 1990 and 2023. India registered about 2·03 lakh cancer cases in 2023, nearly 477% increase from 2023 and over one lakh deaths, a 352·3% increase, since 1990.

New breast cancer cases in women are predicted to rise by a third globally, from 2·3 million in 2023 to more than 3·5 million in 2050. Breast cancer remains the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women worldwide, with an estimated 2·3 million new cases in 2023 and around 764,000 deaths. While older women traditionally had higher diagnosis rates, cases in women aged 20–54 years have risen about 29 per cent since 1990.

Experts highlight that lifestyle factors significantly influence breast cancer risk. In 2023, nearly 28 per cent of healthy years lost to breast cancer were linked to modifiable causes, such as high red meat intake, tobacco use, elevated blood sugar, obesity, alcohol consumption and low physical activity.

As on March 10, 2026, ISRO and AIIMS, New Delhi signed MoU on Cooperation in Space Medicine and Research. The MoU aims to promote joint research aligned with ISRO's priority areas, with a shared objective of advancing human health, performance and safety during human space missions.

India is the 6th Most Polluted Country in the World

According to 2025 IQAIR World Air Quality Report, though India's PM2·5 concentration were at three year low, it still remained the sixth most polluted country in the world. The 8th edition of the report, released on March 24, 2026, reported that India's population-weighted annual average PM2·5 concentration in 2025 was 48·9 $\mu g/m^3$, a 3% decrease from 2024 (50·6 $\mu g/m^3$) and a 10% decrease from 2023 (54·4 $\mu g/m^3$).

The population-weighted numbers give more weight to the particulate matter numbers from cities with higher population—a metric highlighting the quality of air that the majority of a country's population are exposed to.

In 2025, Loni in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad was the most polluted city in the world with PM2·5 concentration at 112·5 $\mu g/m^3$. New Delhi with PM2·5 concentration at 82·2 $\mu g/m^3$ in 2025, remained the top most-polluted capital city in the world, though the PM2·5 concentration was three-year-low and recorded 8% drop from the previous year. Among the ten top most polluted cities in the world, five are from India- Loni, Byrnihat, Delhi, Ghaziabad and Ula. Nieuwoudtville in South Africa was recognised as the world's cleanest city, with an annual average PM2·5 concentration of 1·0 $\mu g/m^3$.

In 2025, Pakistan was the most polluted country, followed by Bangladesh, Tajikistan, Chad and Congo, with India at the sixth spot. The top 20 list consists solely of countries from Asia and Africa. Globally, only thirteen countries/territories met the WHO annual average PM2·5 guideline : French Polynesia, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Barbados, New Caledonia, Iceland, Bermuda, Réunion, Andorra, Australia, Grenada, Panama and Estonia.

17 of the world's 20 most polluted cities are in the Central & South Asia region, with the majority in India and Pakistan. Only 14 per cent of global cities met the World Health Organization (WHO) annual PM2·5 guideline of 5 g/m^3, down from 17 per cent the previous year.

India Ranks Second Globally for Children who are Overweight and Obese

According to the World Obesity Atlas 2026, released by the World Obesity Federation on the World Obesity Day (March 4, 2026), 14·9 million children aged five to nine years and 26·4 million children aged 10 to 19 years in India were overweight or obese in 2025. The report warns that the world was set to miss the 2030 global target (which was earlier set at 2030) to halve the rise in childhood obesity.

Key Highlights of the Report :

- About 41 million children had a high BMI rate.
- By 2040, 20 million children in India will be obese and 56 million will be overweight.
- The report also estimates that at least 120 million children of school-going age are expected to have early signs of chronic illnesses such as hypertension and cardiovascular disease due to weight, in 2040.
- Cases of BMI-related hypertension are expected to rise from 2·99 million to 4·21 million; hyperglycaemia from 1·39 million to 1·91 million; high triglycerides from 4·39 million to 6·07 million; and Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD) previously known as Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) from 8·39 million to 11·88 million.
- 74% of adolescents aged 11 to 17 failed to meet recommended physical activity levels, while only 35·5% of school-age children (primary and secondary) receive school meals.
- Nearly 32·6% of infants aged one to five months experience sub-optimal breastfeeding. Among women aged 15 to 49, 13·4% have high BMI and 4·2% live with Type 2 diabetes. Children aged six to 10 years consumed sugary drinks, averaging up to 50 ml per day.
- While, globally, China leads both categories, with 62 million children with high BMI and 33 million with obesity, India comes second and is tailed by the United States (27 million high BMI; 13 million obesity).

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World This Month

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- *Vietnam and Russia Sign Deal to Build Nuclear Power Plant in Vietnam*
- *India Continues to be the World's Second Largest Arms Importer*
- *Nepal Elections 2026*
- *India and Bhutan Sign MoU on Postal Cooperation*
- *Internationale Tourismus-Borse Berlin 2026*
- *Renewal of Bilateral Swap Arrangement Between Japan and India*

India, Israel Bilateral Ties Elevated to Special Strategic Partnership for Peace, Innovation and Prosperity

India and Israel elevated their bilateral ties to a 'Special Strategic Partnership for Peace, Innovation and Prosperity', during the state visit of the PM Narendra Modi to Israel from February 25-26, 2026. This was the second ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Israel after PM Modi's first visit in 2017.

Key Highlights of the Visit :

- During the visit, 16 agreements/MoUs were signed, covering a wide range of sectors including artificial intelligence, agriculture, cyber-security, fintech, labour mobility, education, fisheries and cultural exchanges.
- On February 25, 2026, PM Narendra Modi addressed a Special Plenary of the Knesset in Jerusalem, becoming the first Indian Prime Minister to address the Israeli Parliament.
- In his address to the Parliament, he highlighted India's firm support for the Gaza Peace Initiative and called for deeper interaction between India and Israel in IMEC and I2U2. He also called for early finalization of Free Trade Agreement between the two countries.
- After his address to the Israeli Parliament, he was conferred with the 'Speaker of the Knesset Medal', the highest honour of the Israeli Parliament, in recognition of his exceptional contribution to strengthening strategic ties between the two countries. He became the first foreign leader to receive the award.
- On February 26, 2026, PM Narendra Modi visited Yad Vashem—The World Holocaust Remembrance Centre- in Jerusalem, where he paid homage to the victims of the Holocaust and participated in a brief prayer ceremony. He also visited the Book of Names Hall which displays personal stories of the victims of the Holocaust.
- Accompanied by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, he also visited tech exhibition in Jerusalem, featuring leading companies and research entities specializing in Agri-tech, Water-tech, Climate-tech, Health-biotech, Smart Mobility, AI, Cybersecurity and Quantum technologies.
- During his meeting with Israeli President Isaac Herzog on February 26, 2026, PM Modi, along with President Herzog and the First Lady, planted a tree in the Israeli President's Garden under the *Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam.*
- The Report of the 4th India-Israel Forum, held in Israel in November 2025, was presented to the both Government. It provided insights and recommendations to align policies with industry trends, promote public-private collaboration and support informed economic decision-making.
- The key announcements made during the visit were : elevation of the Joint Commission on Science and Technology (JCM) to the ministerial level; collaboration in Critical and Emerging Technologies led by National Security Advisors; India–Israel Financial Dialogue to boost closer financial cooperation; Tech Gateway mechanisms to facilitate collaborative R&D initiatives; Launch of 20 Joint Fellowships for Agricultural Research by Indian researchers at the Volcani Agriculture Research Institute in Israel; Quota of up to 50,000 Indian workers over the next 5 years in construction, caregiving and tech sectors; India-Israel Academic Cooperation Forum and India-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group.

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List of MoU/Agreements Signed

- MoU on co-operation in the field of geophysical exploration to facilitate cooperation in mineral exploration using advanced geophysical and AI technologies.
- MoU for development of National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC), Lothal at Gujarat.
- Cultural Exchange Programme for the period 2026-2029.
- MoU between NPCI International (NIPL) and MASAV, Israel on implementation of UPI.
- MoU between ICAR and MASHAV on establishment of the India-Israel Innovation Centre for Agriculture (IINCA).
- Declaration of Intent on cooperation in the field of Horizon Scanning to foster collaboration in advanced horizon scanning to strengthen strategic foresight, risk assessment, and technology planning through joint research, capacity building and AI-driven tools.
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Fisheries and Aquaculture to facilitate cooperation in sustainable, technology-driven fisheries and aquaculture—covering advanced systems, disease management, mariculture and seaweed.
- MoU between International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) and Israel Securities Authority (ISA).
- Implementation Protocol on Labour Mobility in Commerce and Services Sector enabling Indian workers to access employment in Israel through regulated channels across sectors like retail, cleaning, logistics, warehousing, food processing, hospitality, and recycling.
- Implementation Protocol on Labour Mobility in Manufacturing Sector covering recruitment across various manufacturing industries, including textiles, metals, electronics, chemicals, food processing, wood and paper, plastics, rubber and other industrial sectors.
- Implementation Protocol on Labour Mobility in Restaurant Sector.
- MoU on the Cooperation in advancing Education through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Agreement on Cooperation between Israeli Institute of Commercial Arbitration (IICA) and Indian Council of Arbitration (ICA).
- MoU between Nalanda University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI) for establishing a framework for faculty and student exchanges between the two universities in Buddhist studies, archaeology, mathematics, international relations and other fields.
- Letter of Intent on establishment of Indo-Israel Cyber Centre of Excellence in India to facilitate establishment of Joint Cyber Centre of Excellence in India.
- MoU on cooperation in Artificial Intelligence (AI) to promote collaboration in AI development and capacity building, supporting ethical AI, applications in civilian sectors, academic research and public–private partnerships for sustainable growth.

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India and Israel established full diplomatic relations on January 29, 1992. Prior to that, Israel had a Consulate in Mumbai, operating since 1953. In 2003, Ariel Sharon became the first Israeli PM to visit India. India is Israel's second-largest trading partner in Asia and the seventh-largest globally. The bilateral merchandise trade amounting to ₹ 340 billion (US$ 3·75 billion) in FY25. Barak-8 is a collaborative air defence system by Israel and India, designed for both land and naval use.

India, Finland Bilateral Ties Elevated to Strategic Partnership

Dr. Alexander Stubb, the incumbent President of Finland, paid a State Visit to India from 4-7 March 2026. It was his first visit to India as the Finland's President. His visit followed the visit of Mr. Petteri Orpo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland for the AI Impact Summit in February 2026. Dr. Stubb delivered the inaugural keynote address as the Chief Guest during the 11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue, held on 5 March, 2026 in New Delhi. During his visit, President Stubb also visited Mumbai to attend an India-Finland business event, where he also addressed students at the University of Mumbai.

The 11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue was held from 5-7 March, 2026. The theme of the 2026 edition is 'Saṁskāra – Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement'. Over the course of three days, decision makers and thought leaders of the world will engage each other across conversations in various formats, over six thematic pillars: (i) Contested Frontiers: Power, Polarity, and Periphery; (ii) Repairing the Commons: New Groups, New Guardians, New Avenues; (iii) White Whale: The Pursuit of Agenda 2030; (iv) The Eleventh Hour: Climate, Conflict, and the Cost of Delay; (v) Tomorrowland: Towards a Tech-topia; (vi) Trade in the Time of Tariffs: Recovery, Resilience, Reinvention

Key Highlights of the Visit :

- India, Finland bilateral relations were elevated to a *Strategic Partnership in Digitalization and Sustainability*, based on converging interests and mutual benefits.
- Both the countries agreed to double the value bilateral trade by 2030.
- Both the countries agreed to strengthen connections between their startup ecosystems through an Indo-Finland Startup Corridor. It aims to promote participation of Indian startups in the Slush in Helsinki and Finnish startups in the Startup Mahakumbh in New Delhi. Slush is the world's most founder-focussed startup event, held annually in Helsinki.
- Both countries agreed to expand cooperation in advanced technologies by establishing a Joint Working Group on Digitalization, which will focus on areas such as 5G, 6G, artificial intelligence, quantum communications and high-performance computing.
- India and Finland announced plans to co-host the 2026 World Circular Economy Forum in India.
- The countries also launched joint research calls under an implementation arrangement between India's Department of Science and Technology and Business Finland to support collaborative innovation projects.

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- India and Finland reaffirmed commitment to strengthen defence production ties under the Joint Coordination Group and expand collaboration in areas of mutual interest.
- The President of Finland reiterated Finland's support for the permanent membership of India in a reformed UNSC. Both the leaders called for reform the UN system, including UNSC.

Key MoUs/Agreements Signed :

- Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement aims to facilitate the movement of skilled professionals between the two countries.
- Both the countries renewed an earlier Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Cooperation, originally signed in 2020. The renewed agreement will expand collaboration in sustainability-related areas such as bioenergy, waste-to-energy solutions, green hydrogen, renewable energy storage and wind, solar and small hydropower technologies.
- A new MoU on Cooperation in Statistics was signed to promote exchange of expertise and best practices in the field of official statistics.

India-Finland Bilateral Relation

- The diplomatic relationship between both the countries were established in 1949.
- Finland established its resident embassy in India in 1949, which was their first in Asia.
- Finland's leadership in circular economy model can help India to achieve US $ 2 trillion market value in circular economy and create 10 million jobs by 2050. In 2016, under the leadership of the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, Finland was the first country in the world to prepare a national circular economy roadmap.
- Finland is one of the eight permanent members of the Arctic Council, where India is an observer.
- Indian culture and yoga are very popular in Finland.

India and Canada Launch CEPA Negotiations

Prime Minister of Canada, Mark Carney, paid an official visit to India from February 27-March 2, 2026. This was Prime Minister Carney's first visit to India after taking over as the Prime Minister of Canada and was the first bilateral visit to India by a Canadian Prime Minister since 2018. The visit commemorated the 79 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Key Highlights of the Visit :

- 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' adopted as the overarching guiding framework for the renewed India–Canada Strategic Partnership.
- On March 2, 2026, both the countries launched negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, CEPA and signed the Term of Reference (ToR) for this. The proposed CEPA will cover trade in goods, services and other mutually agreed policy areas. It would help in achieving bilateral trade target of USD 50 billion by 2030.
- A $ 2·6 billion agreement has been signed between Saskatchewan's Cameco and India's Department of Atomic Energy to supply uranium to India, supporting India's clean energy transition and energy security.
- India endorsed the G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan, which supports diversified and responsible production and supply of critical minerals.
- India and Canada have agreed have agreed on a long-term deal to supply uranium to India.
- Both the countries will collaborate on establishing a Canada–India Pulse Protein Centre of Excellence at NIFTEM Kundli.
- Relaunch of the Joint Science and Technology Cooperation Committee (JSTCC) for providing a renewed platform to enhance cooperation in critical and emerging technologies, strengthening secure and trusted digital ecosystems, accelerating clean tech and energy innovation and expanding research partnerships.
- Finance Ministers' Economic and Financial Dialogue launched to bring together finance officials on issues such as payments modernization, financial stability, fintech innovation and capital markets development. The inaugural Finance Ministers Economic Dialogue will be hosted at a mutually agreed time in 2026.

Key Announcements Made During the Visit

- 24 MoUs/partnerships among universities / institutions were signed in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, healthcare, agriculture and innovation.
- India welcomed Canada's decision to pursue membership in the International Solar Alliance. India welcomed Canada's signing of the foundational documents to upgrade its participation in the Global Biofuels Alliance as a Full Member.
- India will support Canada to join Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) as a Dialogue Partner.
- Establishment of India-Canada Parliament Friendship Group.
- Reconstitution of India-Canada CEO Forum as a key platform to deepen private-sector engagement and advance practical cooperation across priority sectors.
- India-Canada Defence Dialogue established to exchange views on respective defence policies, regional and global security developments and strategic outlooks in order to identify opportunities for greater defence collaboration.
- A new Joint Talent and Innovation Strategy was announced by Universities Canada for embedding Canadian research and innovation capacity in shared priority sectors. It will strengthen two-way talent flows through structured mobility, joint training pathways and research collaboration.
- Canada announced to participate in the Bharat Tribes Fest-2026, held in New Delhi from 17-30th March, 2026.

MoUs/Agreements Signed During the Visit

- India, Canada and Australia finalised the text of a Trilateral MoU under the Australia–Canada–India

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Technology and Innovation (ACITI) Partnership to advance cooperation in emerging technologies and innovation.

- MoU between All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Mitacs, Canada to provide fully-funded internships of up to 300 eligible Indian students annually for three years (beginning 2027) to undertake a 12-week fully-funded research internship in Canada's academic institutions.
- MoU on Critical Minerals Cooperation to develop secure and resilient critical mineral supply and value chains.
- MoU on promoting the use of Renewable Energy to focus on exchange of information, best practices, lessons learned; and capacity building in the domain of energy storage, solar energy, wind energy and biomass/bio-energy.
- MoU on cultural cooperation to focus on expanding people-to-people ties.

- Canada represents a market of 41·65 million people (2025) and US $ 2·34 trillion in terms of GDP at PPP.
- The bilateral trade between two countries stood at USD 8·66 billion in FY 2024-25 (Exports : USD 4·22 billion; Imports: USD 4·44 billion (According to DGCI&S).
- Key exports from India to Canada include drugs and pharmaceuticals, iron & steel, seafood, cotton garments, electronic goods and chemicals among others. Key imports of India from Canada include pulses, pearls & semiprecious stones, coal, fertilizer, paper and petroleum crude.
- Key sectors of India's services exports to Canada include telecommunications, computer and information services and other business services. These sectors hold significant future growth potential and are expected to expand further following the conclusion of the CEPA.
- Canada is also home to over 425,000 Indian students and a strong Indian community.
- During G20 Leaders' Summit in Johannesburg in November 2025, both the leaders agreed to launch negotiations on Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to double bilateral trade to USD 50 billion by 2030.

Chinese Construct 'Xiaokang' Villages Across LAC

On March 10, 2026, Deputy Chief of the Army Staff (Strategy), Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai, revealed that China has constructed 72% of its 628 Xiaokang, or 'well-off villages', near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in northeastern states, with 90% in Arunachal Pradesh. Many of these villages are coming up in the area which is contested.

China's Xiaokang Border Defence Villages

- Over five years, 628 Xiaokang villages has been constructed by China along LAC in Tibetan Autonomous Region, including the Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh borders.
- The structures include mostly double-storey, large and spacious buildings. The construction for most of these planned villages has already been completed.
- According to officials, these structures have dual-use purpose. They can be used both for civil and military purposes and have thus been a concern from a defence perspective.
- Chinese nationals have started occupying several of these villages particularly across from Lohit Valley and the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh.
- China has also been constructing infrastructure, including border villages, in Bhutanese territory.
- These villages are being built under a new Chinese law passed in 2021 which provides for strengthening border defense, support economic and social development as well as opening-up in border areas, improve public services and infrastructure in such areas, encourage and support people's life and work there and promote coordination between border defense and social, economic development in border areas.

India's Vibrant Villages Programme was launched on 15th February, 2023 for comprehensive development of the select villages in 46 blocks abutting northern border in 19 districts in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and UT of Ladakh. The Phase II of the programme, launched in February 2026, includes 1,954 villages across 334 blocks in 17 states. It includes villages in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Second India-Philippines Maritime Dialogue

The second India-Philippines Maritime Dialogue was held on 2 March, 2026 in New Delhi. The next round of dialogue will be held in Philippines.

Key Highlights :

- The two sides exchanged assessments of developments in the Indo-Pacific region and shared perspectives on Law of the Sea.
- They explored avenues of collaboration at multilateral mechanisms including the United Nations, ReCAAP (Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia) and IONS (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium). Cooperation at ASEAN platforms during Philippines' ASEAN Chairship and the ASEAN-India Maritime year of cooperation were deliberated upon.
- They agreed to strengthen their shared efforts in areas such as marine economy, maritime domain awareness, Navy and Coast Guard engagements, as well as seafarers cooperation.
- They agreed to explore collective efforts in marine scientific research, HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) and in mitigating the challenges of supply chain disruptions.

Iran Targets Sites Near Israel's Key Nuclear Site

On March 21, 2026, Iran launched ballistic missiles targeting the Israeli town of Dimona, home to the Negev

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Nuclear Research Centre, as well as the nearby city of Arad, describing the strikes as a direct response to attack on Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment facility, a day earlier. The IAEA said that the Israel's nuclear facility was not damaged and that no abnormal radiation levels had been detected.

Israel's military said it was not able to intercept missiles that hit the southern cities of Dimona and Arad, the largest near the center in Israel's sparsely populated Negev desert. It was the first time Iranian missiles penetrated Israel's air defense systems in the area around the nuclear site.

Dimona is about 20 km (12 miles) west of the nuclear research center and Arad around 35 km (22 miles) north.

Iran also targeted the joint UK-US Diego Garcia military base in the Indian Ocean about 2,500 miles (4,000 km) away, suggesting that Tehran has missiles that can go farther than previously acknowledged or that it had used its space programme for an improvised launch.

India Co-sponsored Resolution 2817 in UNSC that condemned Iranian attacks on GCC countries and Jordan. The resolution was adopted by UNSC on March 11, 2026.

Operation True Promise 4

As on March 24, 2026, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps carried out its 78th wave of retaliatory strikes against Israeli and American targets, as part of Operation True Promise 4. The IRGC said the strikes hit Israeli sites in Eilat, Dimona, and northern Tel Aviv, as well as a number of US military bases in the region, using Emad and Qadr ballistic missiles and combat drones.

On February 28, 2026, Iran had launched retaliatory strikes against US and Israel in West Asia. Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard named its response 'Operation True Promise 4', launching large-scale strikes on Israel and US military bases across the Middle East, including the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain and other American bases in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq.

The name True Promise (Persian : Va'de-ye Sadeq) is rooted in the ideological foundations of the Islamic Republic, that Iran will always answer an attack on its soil. The number '4' signifies Tehran's framing of the latest assault as the fourth major direct retaliation in an ongoing cycle of escalation that began in April 2024.

As the United States' and Israel's military campaign against Iran and the latter's retaliatory strikes intensifies, Iran has set three conditions for ending the war-recognition of its rights, payment of reparations, and guarantees against future aggression.

As on March 24, 2026, the conflict in West Asia entered its 25th day. Israel remains on high alert following a fresh barrage of Iranian missiles attack earlier in the day. In response, Israeli forces have launched airstrikes targeting around fifty targets in Tehran and other sites across Iran. Israel's Defence Minister has also announced plans to expand military control in southern Lebanon up to the Litani River. Iran has appointed Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr, a former Revolutionary Guard commander, to head the Supreme National Security Council following the death of Ali Larijani in a recent airstrike. Earlier on March 23, 2026, US had announced to pause attacks on Iranian energy sites for 5 days.

In the Gulf, Bahrain has proposed a draft UNSC resolution that would authorise countries to protect commercial shipping in and around the Strait of Hormuz by all necessary means. The diplomatic phrase is widely understood as authorisation for the use of force. Meanwhile Kuwait, the UAE and Saudi Arabia report intercepting multiple incoming drones and missiles. Qatar has renewed calls for an immediate ceasefire, warning that disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz pose a serious threat to global trade and energy supplies. Lebanon Government has ordered Iran's Ambassador to leave the country. The Lebanese government has criticized Iran, accusing its elite Revolutionary Guard of operating within Lebanon alongside the Hezbollah militant group and contributing to escalating conflict with Israel.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are signalling a shift towards more active military coordination, with Riyadh granting expanded access to US forces at King Fahd Air Base.

Global Terrorism Index 2026

The 13th edition of the Global Terrorism Index, published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), provides a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism over the last two decades.

Key Highlights :

- This year's Index recorded a substantial fall in terrorism worldwide. Deaths from terrorism fell 28 per cent to 5,582, while the number of attacks declined by nearly 22 per cent to 2,944.
- However, there was a significant increase in terrorism in Western countries, which accounted for seven of the 19 deteriorations.
- Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates remained the deadliest terrorist organisation in 2025, although the group was active in fewer countries, dropping from 22 to 15.
- The four deadliest terrorist organisations in 2025 were IS, Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM), Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and al-Shabaab. They were collectively responsible for 3,869 deaths, or 70 per cent of all terrorism fatalities.
- Just under 70 per cent of deaths from terrorism occurred in only five countries : Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
- Six of the ten countries most impacted by terrorism are in sub-Saharan Africa, now the global epicentre of terrorism.
- For the first time, Pakistan recorded the highest score on the Index and is the country most impacted by terrorism. This follows a sharp resurgence in terrorist activity driven in part by the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021. Deaths from

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terrorism in Pakistan are now at their highest level since 2013, with the country recording 1,139 terrorism deaths and 1,045 incidents in 2025.

- Nigeria recorded the largest increase in 2025, with fatalities rising by 46 per cent to 750. Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram were responsible for 80 per cent of all terrorism deaths in the country.
- In the West, deaths from terrorism rose sharply, increasing by 280 per cent to 57 deaths. This increase was largely driven by several mass-casualty attacks, including the New Orleans truck attack in the United States in January 2026 and the Bondi Beach shooting in Australia in December, 2025.
- Youth radicalisation has emerged as one of the most pressing security concerns in the West. Youth and minors accounted for 42 per cent of all terror-related investigations in Europe and North America in 2025, a threefold increase since 2021.
- Border proximity is a defining feature of modern terrorism. Over 41 per cent of terrorist attacks occurred within 50 km of an international border, and 64 per cent occurred within 100 km.
- India with a score of 6·428 ranked 13th in the index.

Global Terrorism Index 2026

Top 5 Countries (Rank 1-5)	Bottom 5 Countries (Rank 76-80)
Rank 1 : Pakistan	Rank 76 : Central African Republic
Rank 2 : Burkina Faso	Rank 77 : Georgia
Rank 3 : Niger	Rank 78 : Kosovo
Rank 4 : Nigeria	Rank 79 : Argentina
Rank 5 : Mali	Rank 80 : Saudi Arabia

Operation Ghazab Lil Haq : Pakistan Attack Afghanistan

The 2026 Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict began in late February 2026, when Pakistan carried out air strikes in Afghanistan's eastern provinces—Paktika, Khost and Nangarhar. These attacks were called as 'Open War' between two Islamic countries by the Pakistani Defence Minister.

In retaliation, the Taliban Afghanistan attacked Pakistani military positions and border outposts. In response, Pakistan carried out large-scale land and air strikes, targeting Afghanistan's key provinces such as Kabul, Kandahar, Paktika, Nangarhar, Khost. This military operation was codenamed 'Operation Ghazab Lil Haq' by Pakistan.

On March 16, 2026, Pakistan carried out an air strike on Afghan capital Kabul. Afghanistan said at least 400 people were killed and 250 injured in the strike on a drug rehabilitation hospital, but Pakistan rejected the claim, saying it 'targeted military installations and terrorist support infrastructure'.

In October 2025, border clashes between the two countries killed dozens of soldiers until negotiations facilitated by Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia ended the hostilities and a fragile ceasefire was put in place.

Reason for Latest Escalation

- At the core of the conflict is Pakistan's continued assertion that the Afghan Taliban is offering a safe haven for the jihadist militant group Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), also known as the Pakistani Taliban.
- In October 2025, Pakistan carried out an air strike on Afghanistan that Pakistani military officials said was aimed at attacking the "base of operations for terrorism in Pakistan." This led to the deadliest clash between the two countries since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in 2021.
- A fragile ceasefire was mediated to end the hostilities by Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. However, it dissolved toward the end of 2025.
- The recent escalation in late February 2026 erupted when a suicide bomber killed eleven Pakistani security personnel and two civilians in Bajaur district, according to Pakistani authorities.
- The fighting had ebbed after China, which has good relations with both countries, intervened and sought to cool tensions but it has flared again amid the US-Israeli war on Iran in the neighbourhood.

What Next ?

- Pakistan is likely to intensify its military campaign. Afghanistan could carry out raids on border posts and more cross-border guerrilla attacks to target security forces.
- There is a wide mismatch between the military capabilities of two sides. At 172,000, the Taliban have less than a third of Pakistan's personnel.
- India has strongly condemned Pakistan's recent military actions, while China has sought to mediate the conflict and offered to play a role in de-escalation efforts.

USA Unveils National AI Policy Framework

In United States, Donald Trump administration unveiled a national framework on artificial intelligence. The new AI policy push signals shift to boost innovation, protect citizens and strengthen US leadership. The framework, among others, covers child safety, economic growth, intellectual property, free speech, innovation and workforce development.

Key Highlights of the Policy :

- It aims to create uniform safety and security guardrails around the nascent technology while preempting states from enacting their own AI rules.
- The six-pronged outline broadly proposes a slew of regulations on AI products and infrastructure, ranging from implementing new child-safety rules to standardizing the permitting and energy use of AI data centers.
- It also calls on Congress to address thorny issues surrounding intellectual-property rights and craft rules "preventing AI systems from being used to silence or censor lawful political expression or dissent."

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- The policy calls for AI services and platforms to take measures to protect children, while empowering parents to control their children's digital environment and upbringing.
- AI development, including data infrastructure build out, should strengthen American communities and small businesses through economic growth and energy dominance, while ensuring communities are protected from harmful impacts.
- American creators, publishers and innovators should be protected from AI generated outputs that infringe their protected content, without undermining lawful innovation and free expression.
- The policy calls for defending free speech and First Amendment protections, while preventing AI systems from being used to silence or censor lawful political expression or dissent.
- USA must lead the world in AI by removing barriers to innovation, accelerating deployment of AI applications across sectors and ensuring broad access to the testing environments needed to build world-class AI systems.
- American workers must benefit from AI-driven growth, not just the outputs of AI development, through youth development and skills training, the creation of new jobs in an AI-powered economy and expanded opportunities across sectors.

69th Session of UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs

The 69th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) concluded on March 13, 2026, in Vienna after five days of deliberations on emerging drug trends, treaty implementation, governance issues and international cooperation.

The session brought together 2078 participants, including representatives from 134 Member States, 20 intergovernmental organizations, nine United Nations entities and 198 non-governmental organizations, reflecting broad and high-level engagement, highlighting the Commission's central role as the United Nations' global policymaking platform on drug-related matters.

The Commission decided to place three substances under international control following recommendations from the World Health Organization. Two of the substances, both highly potent synthetic opioids (N-pyrrolidino isotonitazene and N-desethyl etonitazene), are linked to serious overdose risks, while MDMB-FUBINACA, a synthetic cannabinoid, is associated with severe adverse health effects.

Five Resolutions Adopted

- A resolution to reinforce the implementation of Article 13 of the 1988 Convention, which calls upon Member States to enhance regulatory and criminal justice efforts and to strengthen cooperation in preventing the diversion of equipment and related materials used for illicit drug production and manufacture.
- A resolution for enforcing stronger supply chain integrity measures from 'know your customer' practices to enhanced customs cooperation and real-time information sharing.
- An Appendix was adopted to complement the UN Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, promoting climate-sensitive, gender-responsive and community-driven strategies for sustainable transition away from illicit drug economies.
- Resolution to improve early warning mechanisms, emphasizing the importance of data collection, enhanced monitoring, risk assessment and real-time information sharing in enabling faster public health and law enforcement responses to new psychoactive substances.
- Resolution that promotes integrated and coherent systems of scientific evidence-based drug-related public health responses from prevention and treatment to recovery and improved access to and availability of controlled medicines grounded in human rights, gender-responsiveness and coordinated cross-sector action.

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India Supplies 5,000 Metric Tonnes of Diesel to Bangladesh Through Friendship Pipeline

Amid the prevailing tensions in the West Asia, India supplied around 5,000 metric tonnes of diesel to Bangladesh through the Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline, as the country seeks to maintain stable fuel supplies amid global disruptions linked to tensions in West Asia. The shipment is part of a long-term agreement under which India supplies about 180,000 metric tonnes of diesel to Bangladesh annually through the pipeline.

The current supply is expected to help maintain adequate fuel reserves for power generation, transport and agriculture in northern Bangladesh. Bangladesh has also proposed importing an additional 50,000 metric tonnes of diesel from India over the next four months through the same pipeline

The 131-km cross-border pipeline connects the Siliguri Marketing Terminal in India with the Parbatipur depot in northern Bangladesh and was formally inaugurated in 2023 to ensure faster and more cost-effective fuel transportation. Before the pipeline became operational, diesel was transported from the refinery to Bangladesh by rail wagons.

Sri Lanka Approves Indian-Sri Lankan Joint Venture for Key Northern Power Transmission Link

Sri Lanka has approved an Indian-Sri Lankan joint venture to build a key power transmission link connecting wind energy projects in Sri Lanka's northern region. The project forms part of the Mullikulam Wind Power Transmission initiative aimed at strengthening the evacuation of renewable energy generated in the Mannar region.

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The Sri Lanka government had cleared the award of a tender to Intend, which is a Joint Venture of Jyoti Structure Limited from India and Hayleys Fentons Limited of Sri Lanka. The contract, valued at 2·27 billion Sri Lankan rupees (excluding taxes), covers the construction of a 28-km, 220 KV double-circuit transmission line linking the Mannar grid substation to the Mullikulam grid substation.

US Secures $ 57 Billion Energy Deals with Indo-Pacific Partners

The United States has secured energy agreements worth around 57 billion dollars with Indo-Pacific partners, aimed at strengthening regional energy security. The deals, finalised during the first Indo-Pacific energy security conference held in Japan.

The initiative is part of US President Donald Trump's policy to expand energy exports to allied nations, reducing their dependence on uncertain or politically sensitive sources. Among key agreements is a 10-billion-dollar LNG deal involving US-based Venture Global and a major South Korean firm, which aims to provide reliable and affordable energy supplies to partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Slovenia has become the first European Union country to implement fuel rationing to tackle disruptions caused by the US–Israel conflict with Iran, as energy prices surge across the region. Private drivers are limited to a maximum purchase of 50 litres per day, while businesses and farmers can buy up to 200 litres. The move follows a rise in *fuel tourism*, with drivers from neighbouring countries, especially Austria, crossing the border to take advantage of cheaper regulated fuel prices.

Vietnam and Russia Sign Deal to Build Nuclear Power Plant in Vietnam

On March 23, 2026, Vietnam and Russia signed a deal to build a nuclear power plant in Vietnam. The deal for the Ninh Thuan 1 plant comes after two similar projects were shelved in 2016 over rising costs and safety issues. The two countries described the plant as a 'symbolic project' of their friendship. The new plant also fits with Vietnam's ambitions to become rich by 2050 by growing into Asia's next 'tiger economy'. Beyond nuclear energy, both the countries also discussed expanding cooperation in oil and gas, technology and infrastructure.

Vietnam's proposed Ninh Thuan nuclear power project consists of two plants, with each plant comprising two reactors. The Ninh Thuan 1 plant is located in Phuoc Dinh commune, Thuan Nam district. The Ninh Thuan 2 plant is located in Vinh Hai commune, Ninh Hai district.

Russia and Vietnam have existing nuclear technology links, notably with the development of plans for a Centre for Nuclear Science and Technology in Vietnam, which includes a Russian-designed research reactor. The existing Dalat research reactor uses Russian-supplied fuel and provides Vietnam with medical isotopes.

Conflict in West Asia has triggered a global energy shortage, raising the cost of imported fuel. Hence, countries in South East Asia are also searching for stable, long-term power sources. Across Southeast Asia, fast-growing economies are turning to nuclear power for cleaner, more reliable energy.

India Continues to be the World's Second Largest Arms Importer

According to the recent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), released in March 2026, India continues to be the world's second largest arms importer, though imports declined marginally (–4·0 per cent) between 2016–20 and 2021–25. The slight decline is attributed to India's focus on increasing self-reliance in the defence sector.

Key Highlights :

Declining share of Russia :

- The largest share of Indian arms imports came from Russia at 40 per cent—a significantly smaller share than in 2016–20 (51 per cent) and almost half that in 2011–15 (70 per cent).

Western Turn :

- India is increasingly turning to western suppliers to meet military requirements not fulfilled by indigenous companies. France was the second-largest supplier of major arms globally and to India, accounting for 24 per cent of supplies, down from 29 per cent. However, the momentum is expected to accelerate with India officially initiating the process to acquire 114 Rafale fighter jets.
- Israel's share of defence exports to India stood at 15 per cent, unchanged from the previous SIPRI report. However, Israel, the seventh-largest arms supplier, raised its share of global arms exports from 3·1 per cent in 2016–20 to 4·4 per cent in 2021–25, and for the first time overtook the United Kingdom (3·4 per cent) as it managed to sell its air defence systems.

Fear of China :

- The high volume of arms that India imports is largely due to the perceived threat from China and to India's long-running conflict with the main recipient of Chinese arms exports, Pakistan. Imported weapons were used in the 2025 clash between India and Pakistan, both nuclear-armed States.

Global Scenario :

- Overall, the volume of major arms transferred between countries rose by 9·2 per cent between 2016–20 and 2021–25, largely driven by ongoing conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war and escalating tensions across West Asia.
- The United States supplied 42 per cent of all international arms transfers in 2021–25, up from 36 per cent in 2016–20. The US exported arms to 99 states in 2021–25, including 35 states in Europe, 18 in the Americas, 17 in Africa, 17 in Asia and Oceania and 12 in the Middle East.
- For the first time in two decades, the largest share of US arms exports went to Europe (38 per cent) rather than the Middle East (33 per cent). However, Saudi Arabia (12 per cent of US arms exports) remained the top single recipient of US arms.

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- States in Europe more than tripled their arms imports, making it the biggest recipient region. Total exports by the United States, the world's largest supplier of arms, increased by 27 per cent. This included a 217 per cent increase in US arms exports to Europe.

Nepal Elections 2026

In the House of Representatives election held in Nepal on March 5, 2026, the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) won 125 of the 165 seats under direct voting in Nepal's Parliamentary polls as vote counting under the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system concluded on March 10, 2026.

Under the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, the Rastriya Swatantra Party won 125 constituencies. Nepali Congress secured 18 seats, the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) won 10 seats and the Nepal Communist Party won eight seats. The Rastriya Prajatantra Party won one seat, the Shram Sanskriti Party secured three seats and one seat went to an independent candidate.

As on March 15, 2026, The Election Commission of Nepal allocated seats to political parties in the House of Representatives under the Proportional Representation (PR) system. The Rastriya Swatantra Party received 57 seats under the PR system, followed by the Nepali Congress with 20 seats. The Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) secured 16 seats, while the Nepal Communist Party obtained nine seats. The Shram Sanskriti Party and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party received four seats each.

Following the allocation of PR seats, the total strength in the House of Representatives now stands at 182 seats for the Rastriya Swatantra Party, 38 for Nepali Congress, 26 for the Communist Party of Nepal (UML), 17 for the Nepal Communist Party, five for the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and seven for the Shram Sanskriti Party.

Bhumika Shrestha made history on March 16, 2026, as Nepal's first transgender woman MP, confirmed by the Election Commission as a proportional-representation MP for the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP). Nepal outlawed discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation in 2007. A third-gender category for citizenship documents was introduced in 2013 and passports with an 'others' category followed in 2015. In 2023, an interim order from the Supreme Court allowed same-sex and transgender couples to register their marriage.

Balendra Shah was sworn in as Prime Minister of Nepal on March 27, 2026. He is the rapper-turned politician, who was elected Mayor of Kathmandu in 2022 as the independent candidate. His party, the Rastriya Swatantra Party, founded in 2022, aims to be a centrist, reformist force dedicated to anti-corruption and good governance. He resigned as mayor on January 18, 2026, to join the RSP and contest Nepal's general elections. Under a seven-point agreement with RSP chairperson Rabi Lamichhane, Shah became the party's PM candidate, while Lamichhane retained party leadership. His election campaign focussed on youth empowerment, anti-corruption and federalism, which appeals to Gen Z and the millennials, among whom there has been frustration over corruption and the slow pace of change in Nepal.

India and Bhutan Sign MoU on Postal Cooperation

India and Bhutan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Postal Cooperation, providing a structured framework for collaboration between India Post and Bhutan Post. The MoU aims to promote cooperation in areas such as postal operations, technology development, capacity building, logistics connectivity, philately and knowledge exchange.

The agreement was signed between the Ministry of Communications and Bhutan's Infrastructure and Transport Ministry during the ongoing Bhutan visit of the secretary of the Department of Posts. Both nations also agreed to deepen collaboration in the technology domain, including sharing experience and best practices related to India Post's evolving technology ecosystem.

Internationale Tourismus-Borse Berlin 2026

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, participated at ITB Berlin 2026, held from 3rd –5th March at Messe Berlin, Germany. ITB Berlin celebrated its 60th anniversary in March 2026. In addition to the geographic division, the trade show was structured by destinations, market segments such as Adventure Tourism, Business Travel, LGBTQ+ Travel, Luxury Travel, Medical Tourism and Travel Technology.

India participated with a significant delegation of Destination Management Companies (DMCs), hoteliers, State Governments/Union Territories and tour operators from across the country. The India Pavilion at ITB 2026 showcased the country`s rich kaleidoscope of cultures, languages and traditions, its diverse tourism landscape as well as the gamut of niche tourism experiences. The theme of the Pavilion revolved around the Unique and diverse Tourism Experiences of India.

Renewal of Bilateral Swap Arrangement Between Japan and India

India and Japan renewed the Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) effective February 28, 2026. The Bank of Japan, acting as agent for the Minister of Finance of Japan and the Reserve Bank of India signed the third Amendment and Restatement Agreement of the BSA.

The BSA is a two-way arrangement where both authorities can swap their local currencies in exchange for the US Dollar. The size of the BSA remains unchanged, that is, up to 75 billion US Dollars.

Japan and India believe that the BSA, which aims to strengthen and complement other financial safety nets, will further deepen financial cooperation between the two countries and contribute to regional and global financial stability.

P.Darpan

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Updates National and International

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

BHAVYA	—	Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana
CGSMFI	—	Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro-finance Institutions
FIDF	—	Fisheries and Aquaculture Infra-structure Development Fund
I4N	—	Impact for Nutrition
IPRRI	—	Interest Payments to Revenue Receipts Index
ITPO	—	India Trade Promotion Organisation
MTFPS	—	Medium Term Fiscal Policy Statement
NSTFDC	—	National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation
RELIEF	—	Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation
SONTR	—	State Own Non-Tax Revenue

APPOINTMENTS/ELECTIONS

Vikram Doraiswami Appointed as India's Next Ambassador to China

On March 19, 2026, the Union Ministry of External Affairs announced the appointment of Vikram K. Doraiswami as the next Ambassador to China, succeeding Pradeep Kumar Rawat. At the time of his appointment, he was serving as the High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom.

A 1992-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, Vikram Doraiswami served both in Hong Kong and Beijing diplomatic missions in his early career as a diplomat. He served as Third Secretary in Hong Kong in his early career, where he earned an elective diploma in Chinese from the New Asia Yale-in-Asia Language School before moving to Beijing in September 1996 for a four-year tenure. He has also previously served as India's Ambassador to Bangladesh, South Korea and Uzbekistan.

B.P. Singh, Takes Over as Director General of Naval Armament

B.P. Singh, an officer of the 1994 batch Indian Naval Armament Service (INAS), assumed charge as Director General of Naval Armament (DGONA) at Naval Headquarters, New Delhi, on 1 March, 2026, succeeding Divakar Jayant, who superannuated on 28 February, 2026 after rendering distinguished service to the nation.

A Mechanical Engineering graduate from NIT Patna (formerly Bihar College of Engineering), B.P. Singh is an alumnus of the prestigious National Defence College (NDC-60).

Prior to his appointment as DGONA, B.P. Singh was serving as Chief General Manager, Naval Armament Depot (NAD), Mumbai. He has also previously served at the Directorate General of Naval Armament at Naval Headquarters, New Delhi. He has held several important assignments at key establishments, including NAD Visakhapatnam, NAD Mumbai and NAD Trombay.

R.M. Nachammai Becomes the First Woman Chief of Functional Nuclear Power Plant

R.M. Nachammai created history by becoming the first woman Chief Superintendent looking after the operations of a functional nuclear power plant under the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL). She took charge as Chief Superintendent of Karnataka's Kaiga Generating Station Units 3 and 4, effective March 15, 2026, handling Operations, Maintenance and Engineering Support divisions of the operational nuclear reactor complex. The role is considered one of the most technically intense and responsibility-laden positions in the nuclear power ecosystem, involving round-the-clock oversight of reactor operations, safety systems and plant performance.

She joined NPCIL in 1991, where she received the Vikram Sarabhai Award for topping the second batch of NPCIL's engineer trainees. She gained hand-on experience in operation, maintenance and engineering operations while serving in nuclear power stations in Kaiga and Kalpakkam. Her contributions have been formally recognised with the NPCIL Special Contribution Award in 2010, 2014 and 2017.

B. Ravindran Appointed to UN's Independent International Scientific Panel on AI

Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) Professor B. Ravindran has been appointed to the Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence, established by the United Nations to provide rigorous, independent scientific assessment of AI's impact on society.

Prof. B. Ravindran is the Founding Head of Centre for Responsible AI (CeRAI) at IIT Madras and currently serves as Head of the Wadhwani School of Data Science and AI (WSAI). His research interests span responsible AI and deep reinforcement learning.

The Independent International Scientific Panel on AI aims to strengthen global scientific cooperation, generate evidence-based insights on AI deployment and support international governance efforts by providing independent, multidisciplinary expertise on the technology's societal, economic and ethical implications.

Saba Shawl Becomes First Kashmiri Woman Superintendent of Srinagar Central Jail

Saba Shawl, who has been recently appointed as the Superintendent of Srinagar Central Jail on March 2, 2026,

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becomes the first Kashmir woman to head J&K's biggest correctional facility. She has already served in the administration department at the Central Jail in Kot Balwal, Jammu and the Kupwara Jail.

Ms. Shawl, who is a resident of Srinagar's Peerbagh, qualified through the J&K Public Service Commission examination in 2012 for the post of Superintendent of Police (Prisons). She has a master's degree in Social Work and was employed as the senior Community Development Consultant at the Government Polytechnic for Women, Bemina. Prior to her latest appointment, Shawl served as Staff Officer to the Director General (prisons). She has also served as a Public Relations Officer in the J&K prisons department.

Baroruchi Mishra Appointed as MD and CEO of the Hindustan Oil Exploration Company

Baroruchi Mishra has been appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Hindustan Oil Exploration Company Limited with effect from April 1, 2026, for three-year term, succeeding Ramasamy Jeevanandam.

Mr. Baroruchi obtained his B-Tech degree in Petroleum Engineering from IIT (ISM-Dhanbad). He is a Chartered Manager; he obtained the Chartership after completing his Business Administration from the Chartered Managers Institute, UK. He also serves as an Adjunct Faculty at the IIT–ISM (Dhanbad) for CCUS and ECBM disciplines in the Petroleum Engineering Department.

Deepak Gupta Assumed Charge as Chairman and Managing Director of GAIL

The Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas appointed Deepak Gupta as the Chairman and the Managing Director of the Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) for three years tenure, with effect from the date of assumption of charge on or after March 1, 2026.

He joined GAIL in 2022 as Director (Projects) in February 2022. Earlier, as a Board member of GAIL, he played a pivotal role in strategic goal setting, stakeholder alignment, corporate governance, future-ready business planning. During his 32-years tenure at the Engineers India Limited, he led the first greenfield refinery project in Mongolia, contributing significantly to India's global energy diplomacy.

President Droupadi Murmu announced new Governors for seven States and Lt. Governors for two Union Territories on March 5, 2026



Rejendra Vishwanath Arlekar

Given additional charge of **Tamil Nadu**

Current role **Governor of Kerala**



R.N. Ravi

Appointed Governor of **West Bengal**

Previous role **Governor of Tamil Nadu**

Name	State/Union Territory
Jishnu Dev Varma	Maharashtra
Shiv Pratap Shukla	Telangana
Kavinder Gupta	Himachal Pradesh
Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Syed Ata Hasnain	Bihar
Nand Kishore Yadav	Nagaland
Taranjit Singh Sandhu	Delhi
Vinai Kumar Saxena	Ladakh

West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose resigned from his post ahead of West Bengal Assembly polls

Jose Antonio Kast Rist Sworn-in as Chile's New President

On March 11, 2026, Jose Antonio Kast Rist was sworn-in as Chile's new President, during a formal ceremony held at the National Congress building in the coastal city of Valparaíso. Outgoing President Gabriel Boric handed over the *Piocha de O'Higgins*, a traditional

Other Important Appointments in News

Jasprit Bumrah	Global apparel brand UNIQLO has announced Indian cricket star Jasprit Bumrah as its new brand ambassador in India, marking a strategic collaboration that aligns sport with everyday lifestyle fashion.
Arun Mammen	He has been re-elected as the Chairman of the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA.) He is the Vice Chairman & Managing Director of MRF Ltd. ATMA, established in 1975, represents the over USD 12 billion automotive tyre industry in India, representing over 80 per cent of production of tyres in the country.
Anita Shukla	She has been appointed as the India's Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador. At the time of her appointment, she was serving as the Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. She is an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of 2006 batch.
Rajan Bajaj	Bengaluru-based Slice Small Finance Bank has appointed its founder Rajan Bajaj as managing director and chief executive officer, effective 17 February, 2026, following approval from the Reserve Bank of India. Established in 2016 by IIT Kharagpur-alumnus Bajaj, the Bank has raised over $ 250 million from big investors including Tiger Global, Insight Partners and Advent International. It serves more than 20 million registered users and employs over 3,000 people.
Asha Sharma	Indian-origin Asha Sharma has been recently appointed as Executive Vice President and CEO of Microsoft Gaming. Over the last two years at Microsoft and previously as Chief Operating Officer at Instacart and a Vice President at Meta, Asha has helped build and scale services that reach billions of people and support thriving consumer and developer ecosystems.
Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi	The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet recently approved the reappointment of Dr. Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi as Drugs Controller (India) at the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for another year on a contractual basis, effective March 1, 2026.
Alois Zwinggi	He has been recently appointed as the Interim President and CEO of the World Economic Forum (WEF), after the former President Børge Brende stepped down.
Rahul Bhatia	IndiGo co-founder Rahul Bhatia has taken over as interim CEO following former Indigo CEO Pieter Elbers' resignation after months of operational challenges.

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emblem symbolising the authority of the Chilean presidency, to his successor.

Kast's political journey began while studying law at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, where he joined the Gremial Movement founded by Jaime Guzmán. He later spent nearly two decades with the right-wing Independent Democratic Union (UDI) party, serving as a municipal council member and later as a member of Congress from 2002 to 2018.

In 2019, Kast established the Republican Party, advocating a stronger conservative political platform. Known for his tough stance on security, opposition to immigration and conservative social views, Kast has often been at the centre of political debate in Chile. After unsuccessful presidential campaigns in 2017 and 2021, Kast secured victory in his third attempt, defeating left-wing candidate Jeannette Jara in a runoff election held in December 2025.

Minister of State for External Affairs and Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh visited the Republic of Chile from 10-12 March, 2026 to represent the Government of India at the inauguration ceremony of the newly elected President of Chile, H.E. Mr. José Antonio Kast Rist. He also interacted with the outgoing President Gabriel Boric, who became the Chile's youngest President in 2022 at the age of 36.

DEATHS/OBITUARIES

Renowned Historian K.N. Pannikar Passes Away

On March 9, 2026, renowned historian K.N. Pannikar passed away in Thiruvananthapuram at the age of 89 years. Pannikar was known for his extensive works on modern Indian cultural, intellectual and social history. He taught at the Jawaharlal Nehru University. He served as the Vice-Chancellor of Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit in Kerala and the first Vice-Chairperson of the Kerala State Higher Education Council. He was also the founding chairperson of the Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR).

In 2008, he was elected President of the Indian History Congress, the country's largest body of professional historians. He was also the founding President of the Kerala History Congress.

His seminal work, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar (1836-1921),* which examined the rebellion as a peasant uprising against landlordism and colonial power.

Veteran Journalist and Former Rajya Sabha Member H.K. Dua Passes Away

On March 4, 2026, Hari Krishan Dua (H.K. Dua) passes away at the age of 88. He was the former editor of three leading national dailies and Rajya Sabha MP.

His extensive career in journalism included serving as the Editor of The Hindustan Times (1987-94), the Editor-in-Chief of The Indian Express (1994-96) as well as The Tribune (2003-09). He also worked as the media adviser to two former Prime Ministers, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and H.D. Deve Gowda. He was also Editorial Adviser for The Times of India from 1997 to 1998.

He also served as India's Ambassador to Denmark from 2001 to 2003. In 2009, he was nominated to the Rajya Sabha, where he served until 2015. He also served on the National Security Advisory Board. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2008, recognizing his significant contributions towards journalism and public life.

Steel Industry Veteran Jatinder Mehra Passes Away

On February 24, 2026, Jatinder Mehra, a veteran of India's steel and metals industry, passed away at the age of 86. At the time of his death, was serving as Vice Chairman of the Metals & Mining Division at Essar Group. He was widely recognised for his deep technical expertise, operational excellence and transformational leadership.

Prior to joining Essar, Mehra held several senior leadership positions in India's public sector steel industry, including SAIL as Executive Director and Chairman-cum-Managing Director of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam, where he led the commissioning of the Vizag Steel Plant. In 2022, the Indian Steel Association honoured him with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Renowned Indologist Professor Hermann Kulke Passes Away

On March 10, 2026, Professor Hermann Kulke passed away at the age of 87. He was the renowned historian and Indologist who is considered the foremost global voice of Odisha's culture and history.

He was a founding member and coordinator of the first two Orissa (now Odisha) Research Projects of the German Research Council and taught Indian history for 21 years at the South Asia Institute at Heidelberg University. He was based in Odisha for several years and was conferred with the Padma Shri in 2010.

His 1975 thesis, 'Jagannatha Cult and Gajapati-Kingship. A Contribution to the History of Religious Legitimation of Hindu Rulers', Prof Kulke explored how the Jagannath Cult served as a mechanism for political legitimation in medieval Odisha and how the Gajapati kings used the deity to solidify their authority.

Defence Analyst Maroof Raza Passes Away

Renowned Defence analyst Major Maroof Raza passed away at the age of 67 on February 26, 2026. A retired Indian Army officer, he had extensive experience in counter-insurgency operations.

He anchored the 20-part series 'Line of Duty', focussed on the Indian Armed Forces; an episode on the Siachen Glacier won a military documentary award at the 2005 Rome Film Festival and the series entered the Limca Book of Records as India's first military reality show. He also hosted Latitude and India Risk Report, further establishing his voice in national security discourse.

T.K. Oommen, Renowned Sociologist, Passes Away

On February 26, 2026, T.K. Oommen passed away in Gurugram at the age of 88. Professor Emeritus at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, he was regarded as the leading architect of modern Indian sociology. He had gained wide attention for his study of the Bhoodan Movement and as chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Gujarat Harmony Project, formed after the 2002 communal violence in the State.

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Prof. Oommen was a former president of the International Sociological Association (ISA) and the Indian Sociological Society and a member of the Sachar Committee, which studied the social, economic and educational status of India's Muslim community.

He was the recipient of several prominent awards such as Padma Bhushan in 2008, V.K.R.V. Rao prize in Sociology, the G.S. Ghurye prize in Sociology and Social Anthropology and the UGC's Swami Pranavananda Award in Sociology.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

98th Academy Awards (Oscars 2026)

The 98th Academy Awards honoured movies released in 2025 on March 15, 2026, at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood in Los Angeles. The show was hosted by comedian Conan O'Brien for the second consecutive time, with Raj Kapoor and Katy Mullan returning as executive producers for the third consecutive year and Hamish Hamilton returning as director.

'One Battle After Another' won a leading six awards, including the inaugural Best Casting award. 'Sinners' won four awards, including Best Actor award.

Prominent Categories and Winners :

- **Best Picture :** One Battle After Another
- **Best Actress :** Jessie Buckley for Hamnet
- **Best Actor :** Michael B. Jordan for Sinners
- **Best Director :** Paul Thomas Anderson for One Battle After Another
- **Best Supporting Actress :** Amy Madigan for Weapons
- **Best Supporting Actor :** Sean Penn for One Battle After Another
- **Best Casting :** Cassandra Kulukundis for One Battle After Another
- **Best Animated Feature :** KPop Demon Hunters
- **Best International Feature :** Sentimental Value (Norway)
- **Best Documentary Feature :** Mr. Nobody Against Putin
- **Best Original Screenplay :** Ryan Coogler for Sinners
- **Best Adapted Screenplay :** Paul Thomas Anderson for One Battle After Another
- **Best Original Score :** Ludwig Goransson for Sinners
- **Best Original Song :** KPop Demon Hunters
- **Best Cinematography :** Autumn Durald Arkapaw for Sinners
- **Best Film Editing :** Andy Jurgensen for One Battle After Another
- **Best Sound :** F1
- **Best Animated Short :** The Girl Who Cried Pearls
- **Best Documentary Short :** All The Empty Rooms

79th BAFTA Awards

The 79th British Academy Film Awards (2026) was held on 22nd February, 2026, in London. It was hosted by Alan Cumming for the first time. *One Battle After Another* received the most nominations (fourteen nominations) and won the most awards (six awards.)

Prominent Categories and Winners :

- **Best Picture :** One Battle After Another
- **Outstanding British Film :** Hamnet
- **Leading Actress :** Jessie Buckley for *Hamnet*
- **Leading Actor :** Robert Aramayo for *I Swear*
- **Supporting Actress :** Wunmi Mosaku for *Sinners*
- **Supporting Actor :** Sean Penn for *One Battle After Another*
- **Director :** Paul Thomas Anderson for *One Battle After Another*
- **Outstanding debut by a British writer, director or producer :** My Father's Shadow
- **Film Not in the English Language :** Sentimental Value
- **Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema :** Clare Binns
- **Documentary :** Mr Nobody Against Putin
- **Animated Film :** Zootropolis 2
- **Children's and Family Film :** Boong
- **Original Screenplay :** Sinners
- **Adapted Screenplay :** One Battle After Another
- **EE BAFTA Rising Star Award :** Robert Aramayo
- **Original Score :** Ludwig Göransson for *Sinners*
- **Casting :** I Swear
- **Cinematography :** One Battle After Another
- **Editing :** One Battle After Another
- **Sound :** F1
- **Special Visual Effects :** Avatar : Fire and Ash
- **British Short Film :** This Is Endometriosis
- **British Short Animation :** Two Black Boys in Paradise

- The 21st edition of the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) 2026 took place in New Delhi from March 19-25, 2026. Veteran actor Amol Palekar was awarded the META Lifetime Achievement Award 2026.
- Rashmika Mandanna won the Best Actress at the Telangana Gaddar Film Awards 2025 for *The Girlfriend*. Actor Kamal Haasan received the Paidi Jairaj Film Award. The awards are named after the Telugu poet and balladeer Gaddar.

Nita Ambani Conferred KISS Humanitarian Award 2025

On 16th March, 2026, Nita M. Ambani, Founder and Chairperson of Reliance Foundation, was conferred the prestigious KISS Humanitarian Award 2025 at Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) in Bhubhaneshwar, Odisha.

The award recognized Nita Ambani's outstanding humanitarian initiatives and her significant contributions to social development through education, healthcare, rural transformation, women empowerment and sports promotion through the Reliance Foundation.

William Dalrymple Wins Mark Lynton History Prize 2026

The 2026 Mark Lynton History Prize has been awarded to William Dalrymple for his book, "The Golden Road : How Ancient India Transformed the World." for combining 'literary grace, commitment to serious research and social concern'.

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The Mark Lynton History Prize is an annual $10,000 award given to a book of history, on any subject, that best combines intellectual or scholarly distinction with felicity of expression. The prize is one of three awards given as part of the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize administered by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism and by the Columbia University School of Journalism. The Mark Lynton History Prize, is named for the late Mark Lynton, a business executive and author of "Accidental Journey : A Cambridge Internee's Memoir of World War II."

Tata Group Chairman N. Chandrasekaran Conferred with Honorary Knighthood

Tata Group Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran received the insignia of the Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE) on March 18, 2026, for his services to UK-India business relations. The award, presented on behalf of the UK King Charles III, highlighted the Tata Group's role as a long-standing investor in the United Kingdom. The Tata Group is a long-standing investor in the UK with operations spanning automotive, steel, technology and consumer sectors. It plays an important role in supporting UK jobs, advanced manufacturing and the transition to clean technologies.

Rituparna Sengupta Receives Women Empowerment Award at the UK House of Commons

Rituparna Sengupta was honoured with the Women Empowerment Award for Art and Culture at the House of Commons in the UK. The award was presented by Seema Malhotra and Virendra Sharma at an event organised by GloWomen CiC to mark International Women's Day (March 8, 2026.) The event celebrated women across fields for their contributions, with Rituparna being recognized for her work in art and culture.

Zero Prize Launches India's First Results Based National Environmental Award

The 'Zero Prize', recently announced at the India Habitat Centre was unveiled as India's first national results-based environmental award, convened by the School of Policy and Governance and supported through philanthropic contributions, corporate CSR partnerships and institutional stakeholders.

With a total corpus of ₹ 5 crore, the Zero Prize will award ₹ 1 crore each across three categories—Air, Water and Land, to solutions that demonstrate scientifically validated pollution reduction within defined geographies. The Prize is open to startups, NGOs, corporates, municipal bodies, research institutions, and individual innovators across India.

Saraswati Samman 2025

Bengali Novel *Hara Parbati Katha* by Author Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay has been selected for Saraswati Samman, 2025. The Saraswati Samman, instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991, is an annual award given to outstanding literary work written in any Indian language by an Indian citizen and published during the last 10 years. The awardee will be given ₹ 15 lakh, a citation and a plaque.

Sahitya Akademi Announces Awards for 2025 in 24 Languages

On March 16, 2026, the Sahitya Akademi announced its annual awards for 2025 in the 24 languages recognised by it, nearly three months after the process was abruptly put on hold following directives from the Union Ministry of Culture. This year awards include eight poetry books, four novels, six short stories and two essays. Meanwhile, one literary criticism, one autobiography and two memoirs have also been selected for the award.

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 : Title (Genre) and Author

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Assamese	Karhi Khelar Sadhu (Novel)	Devabrat Das
Bengali	Shrestha Kabita (Poetry)	Prasun Bandyopadhyay
Bodo	Dwngnwi Lama Mwnse Gathwn (Novel)	Sahaisuli Brahma
Dogri	Thakur Satsayie (Poetry, Couplets)	Khajur Singh Thakur
English	Crimson Spring (Novel)	Navtej Sarna
Gujarati	Bhattkhadaki (Poetry)	Yogesh Vaidya
Hindi	Jeete Jee Allahabad (Memoir)	Mamta Kalia
Kannada	Dada Seerisu Tande (Short Stories)	Amaresh Nugadoni
Kashmiri	Najdavanek'y Pot Aalav (Poetry)	Ali Shaida
Konkani	Konkani Kavyem: Rupani Ani Rupakam (Essays)	Henry Mendonca (H.M. Pernal)
Maithili	Dhatri Paat San Gaam (Memoir)	Mahendra
Malayalam	Maayaamanushyar (Novel)	N. Prabhakaran
Manipuri	Kanglamdriba Eephut (Short Stories)	Haobam Nalini
Marathi	Kalyanilya Resha (Autobiography)	Raju Baviskar
Nepali	Nepali Paramparik Sanskriti Ra Sabhyata Ko Dukuti (Essays)	Prakash Bhattarai
Odia	Padapurana (Poetry)	Girijakumar Baliyar Singh
Punjabi	Safety Kit (Stories)	Jinder
Rajasthani	Bharkhama (Stories)	Jitender Kumar Soni
Sanskrit	Prasthanacatustaye Brahmaghosah (Poetry)	Mahamahopadhyaya Sadhu Bhadreshdas
Santali	Mid Birna Chenne Saon Inag Sagai (Short Stories)	Sumitra Soren
Sindhi	Waghoo (Stories)	Bhagwan Atlani
Tamil	Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangal (Literary Criticism)	Sa. Tamilselvan
Telugu	Animesha (Poetry)	Nandini Sidha Reddy
Urdu	Safar Jaari Hai (Poetry)	Pritpal Singh Betab

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Professor Kaveh Madani Named the 2026 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate

As on March 18, 2026, Professor Kaveh Madani, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), has been named the 2026 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate. The announcement was made at the World Water Day (March 22, 2026) ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

At 44, he is the youngest laureate in the prize's history, as well as the first UN official and the first former politician to receive the honour.

Often described as the 'Nobel Prize of Water', the Stockholm Water Prize (established in 1991) is presented by the Stockholm Water Foundation in cooperation with the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

AGREEMENT/MoU/PACT

Indian Army and Ladakh Forest Department Sign MoU to Protect Wildlife

On the occasion of World Wildlife Day, the Indian Army and the Forest, Ecology and Environment Department of Ladakh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to preserve the fragile ecology and conserve majestic species. The Species include Snow Leopard, Himalayan Wolf, Bharal, Ibex, Marmot, Black-necked Crane and their habitats under the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Forum.

The Defence Ministry said that the MoU aims to promote sustainable development and environmental protection in the high-altitude ecosystems of Ladakh, reaffirming a shared commitment to preserving Ladakh's rich biodiversity and fragile ecosystem for future generations. A joint Snow Leopard Conservation Cell will monitor conservation efforts, furthering the goals of conserving the species.

India and Sweden Sign Statement of Intent to Enhance Cooperation in AI & Digital Technologies

On the sidelines of India AI Impact Summit 2026, the India AI Mission and Business Sweden signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to enhance cooperation in AI and digital technologies, which provides a structured framework for collaboration on the development, application and deployment of artificial intelligence solutions. Under the agreement, both countries will jointly develop a dedicated programme titled the Sweden-India Technology and Artificial Intelligence Corridor (SITAC), which will serve as a platform to facilitate structured engagement among government agencies, industry stakeholders, startups and academic institutions from both countries.

NITI Aayog and UNICEF India Sign SoI to Strengthen Nutrition and Health Outcomes in Aspirational Districts and Blocks

On 5th March, 2026, NITI Aayog and UNICEF India today signed a Statement of Intent to support strategic interventions in Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks. This collaboration aims to leverage the strengths of both institutions to advance efforts toward improved maternal and child nutrition outcomes in underserved regions. The partnership will support the promotion of multi-stakeholder engagement and strengthen implementation systems for nutrition and health interventions at the block level.

NICEF India, through the IMPAct4Nutrition (I4N) platform, will provide technical expertise and support engagement with businesses, public sector enterprises and industry associations to channel CSR investments into nutrition-focussed initiatives. The collaboration will focus on strengthening Anganwadi infrastructure, enhancing nutrition literacy, improving uptake of ICDS services and building the capacity of frontline workers.

India and Nepal Sign MoU to Promote Bilateral Cooperation

On 25th February, 2026, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change signed an MoU with the Ministry of Forests and Environment, Government of Nepal, to promote bilateral cooperation in the areas of forests, wildlife, environment, biodiversity conservation and climate change, including restoration of wildlife corridors and interlinking areas and exchange of knowledge, technical expertise and best practices.

The MoU envisages cooperation in formulation of biodiversity conservation strategies at the landscape level with emphasis on key species such as elephant, Gangetic dolphin, rhinoceros, snow leopard, tiger and vultures.

SURVEY/REPORT/INDEX

World Happiness Report 2026

The World Happiness Report 2026, released on March 20, 2026, was published by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford in partnership with Gallup and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. The report placed Finland as the happiest country for the ninth consecutive year, while India ranked 116th out of 147 countries.

Six Pillars of Evaluation of Global Happiness Index

- GDP per capita
- Life expectancy
- Social support
- Freedom to make life choices
- Generosity
- Perceptions of corruption

Key Highlights :

- 2026 World Happiness Report highlighted the impact of social media as many countries impose or mull legislative restrictions on social media use for young people.
- The report, found life satisfaction among under-25s in countries including the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand has fallen sharply over the past decade.

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- Finland ranked as the world's happiest country for a ninth consecutive year, with Nordic nations dominating the top rankings. The report attributed the Nordic dominance to wealth, equality, strong welfare systems and high life expectancy.
- Costa Rica rose to fourth place, attributed to strong social and family ties.
- For the second year in a row, no major English-speaking countries made the top 10, with Australia at 15th, the United States at 23rd, Canada at 25th and the UK at 29th.
- Among the conflict-ridden states, Myanmar ranked 129th (136 in 2025, 118 in 2024); the State of Palestine ranked 109th (108 in 2025, 103 in 2024); Israel at 8th position, continued to be among top 10 as it was in 2025 (8th) and 2024 (5th), while Ukraine continued at 111th rank, same as in 2025 but below 105th in 2024.
- China was ranked in 65th position this year, down from 68th last year and 60th in 2024; Russia is at 79th (66 in 2025, 72 in 2024), while the USA was at 23rd position this year (24 in 2025, 23 in 2024).

World Happiness Report 2026 Ranking

Top 10 Countries (Rank 1 to 10)	Bottom 10 Countries (Rank 138 to 147)
1. Finland	138. Tanzania
2. Iceland	139. Egypt
3. Denmark	140. DR Congo
4. Costa Rica	141. Lebanon
5. Sweden	142. Yemen
6. Norway	143. Botswana
7. Netherlands	144. Zimbabwe
8. Israel	145. Malawi
9. Luxembourg	146. Sierra Leone
10. Switzerland	147. Afghanistan

India and Neighbouring Countries Performance

- Among the 147 countries featured in the report, India ranks 116th, a slight improvement from its 118th position in 2025.
- In 2026, India ranked 64th on perception of corruption (questions about prevalence of corruption); 78th on generosity (donation to charity); 61th on freedom (freedom to choose); 89th on GDP per capita (in terms of purchasing power parity); 95th on healthy life expectancy (based on data from WHO) and 123rd on social support (who one can count in need).
- Nepal having 99th rank (92 in 2025, 93 in 2024) and Pakistan with 104th rank (109 in 2025, 108 in 2024) remained much ahead of India. Sri Lanka ranked 134th (134 in 2025, 128 in 2024) and Bangladesh 127th (127 in 2025, 12 in 2024).

CONFERENCE/MEETINGS

International Malaria Conference 2026

The International Malaria Conference (IMC) 2026, organised by the ICMR–National Institute of Malaria Research (ICMR–NIMR) under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), concluded successfully in New Delhi after three days of intensive scientific deliberations and global engagement. Held from 7th to 9th March, 2026, the conference brought together scientists, public health experts, policymakers and researchers from India and across the world to discuss innovative approaches and strategies for malaria elimination.

The conference was organised under the theme 'Discovery, Development and Delivery : Driving Malaria Elimination and Beyond'. It served as an important platform for sharing scientific knowledge, strengthening partnerships and discussing emerging challenges in malaria control and elimination.

Scientific sessions under the Discovery theme focussed on advances in parasite biology, transmission dynamics and emerging molecular mechanisms that influence malaria persistence and drug resistance. Sessions under the Development theme highlighted innovations in malaria diagnostics, research tools and technologies aimed at improving surveillance and disease detection. Delivery theme, emphasising the translation of scientific discoveries into practical public health interventions and operational strategies.

Bharat Tribes Business Conclave 2026

The Bharat Tribes Fest–Business Conclave was inaugurated on 19th March, 2026, at Sunder Nursery, New Delhi. The Conclave was sponsored by the Ministry of Coal and being held in association with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Tribal Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TICCI), serving as the Knowledge Partners.

The Business Conclave marked a significant step towards positioning tribal enterprises within India's mainstream economic and industrial ecosystem. Envisaged as an outcome-oriented platform, it brings together senior leadership from the Government of India and State Governments, along with industry leaders, corporates, investors, development institutions, startups and tribal entrepreneurs.

DEFENCE

Dharma Guardian 2026

The 7th edition of the annual Joint Military Exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN' between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) took place at the Foreign Training Node, Chaubattia in Uttarakhand. The exercise was conducted from 24 February to 9 March, 2026.

This edition brought together a 120-member contingent from each side, with the Japanese Armed Force represented by troops from the 32nd Infantry Regiment and the Indian Army contingent drawn from the Ladakh Scouts. The exercise is held alternately in India and Japan and remains a key pillar of defence cooperation between the two nations.

The aim of Exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN' was to strengthen military collaboration and enhance combined capabilities to undertake joint operations in a semi-urban environment. The Joint Exercise was anchored in employment of modern technology, enhancing interoperability and contemporary operational aspects.

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Exercise Vayu Shakti 2026

The Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully conducted Exercise Vayushakti-26 at Pokhran Field Firing Range, Jaisalmer, demonstrating its formidable combat readiness, operational synergy and technological prowess across full spectrum of air operations. The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu graced the Fire Power Demonstration as the Chief Guest.

The exercise showcased IAF's capability to execute complex, integrated air operations within a dynamic and realistic battlefield environment. For the first time, Exercise Vayu Shakti was executed along a defined operational storyline, transforming into simulated live combat theatre. The exercise seamlessly integrated offensive air strikes, air defence operations special forces missions and humanitarian assistance, highlighting IAF's role as a multi-domain, integrated force and nation's first responder.

Over 130 aircraft participated in a day and night exercise including Rafale, Su-30 MKI, Mirage-2000, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Mi-17, C-130J, C-295, C-17, the indigenous Advance Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv and Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Prachand.

Exercise Amogh Jwala

The Indian Army's Southern Command conducted the Exercise Amogh Jwala from March 6 to 18, 2026, at the Babina field firing ranges in Uttar Pradesh. The aim of the exercise was to validate technology-driven mechanised warfare capabilities in a multi-domain operational environment.

The exercise featured high-tempo mechanised operations with synchronised fire and manoeuvre, real-time drone-enabled surveillance and target acquisition, precision engagement and the seamless integration of advanced battlefield technologies. It demonstrated the integrated employment of mechanised forces with attack helicopters, fighter aircraft, unmanned aerial systems, counter-drone systems and network-enabled battlefield platforms under a robust command and control architecture.

PLACES IN THE NEWS

Kharg Island

Kharg Island is the 22 square kilometre coral outcrop in Iran's Busheshr Province. It is located in the northern Persian Gulf and the presence of natural freshwater resources makes it suitable for human population.

Iranian writer Jalal Al-e-Ahmad called the island as the 'orphan pearl of the Persian Gulf.' Today, it is also known as the 'Forbidden Island.' Guarded by the elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, official security clearances are needed to enter the facility.

Located 55km (34 miles) northwest of the Bushehr port and 15 nautical miles (equivalent to about 28km) from the Iranian mainland, Kharg Island is the undisputed economic backbone of Iran. It receives crude from three major offshore fields – Aboozar, Forouzan and Dorood which is then transported via a complex network of subsea pipelines to onshore processing facilities before being stored or shipped to global markets. Ninety per cent of Iran's crude oil comes through a terminal on the island - transported through pipes from the mainland.

It was reported on 13 March, 2026, that the US military had bombed Kharg Island. US Central Command (CENTOM) said that US forces had struck "more than 90 Iranian military targets on Kharg Island, while preserving the oil infrastructure".

IMPORTANT DAYS/WEEKS/YEARS

May 2026

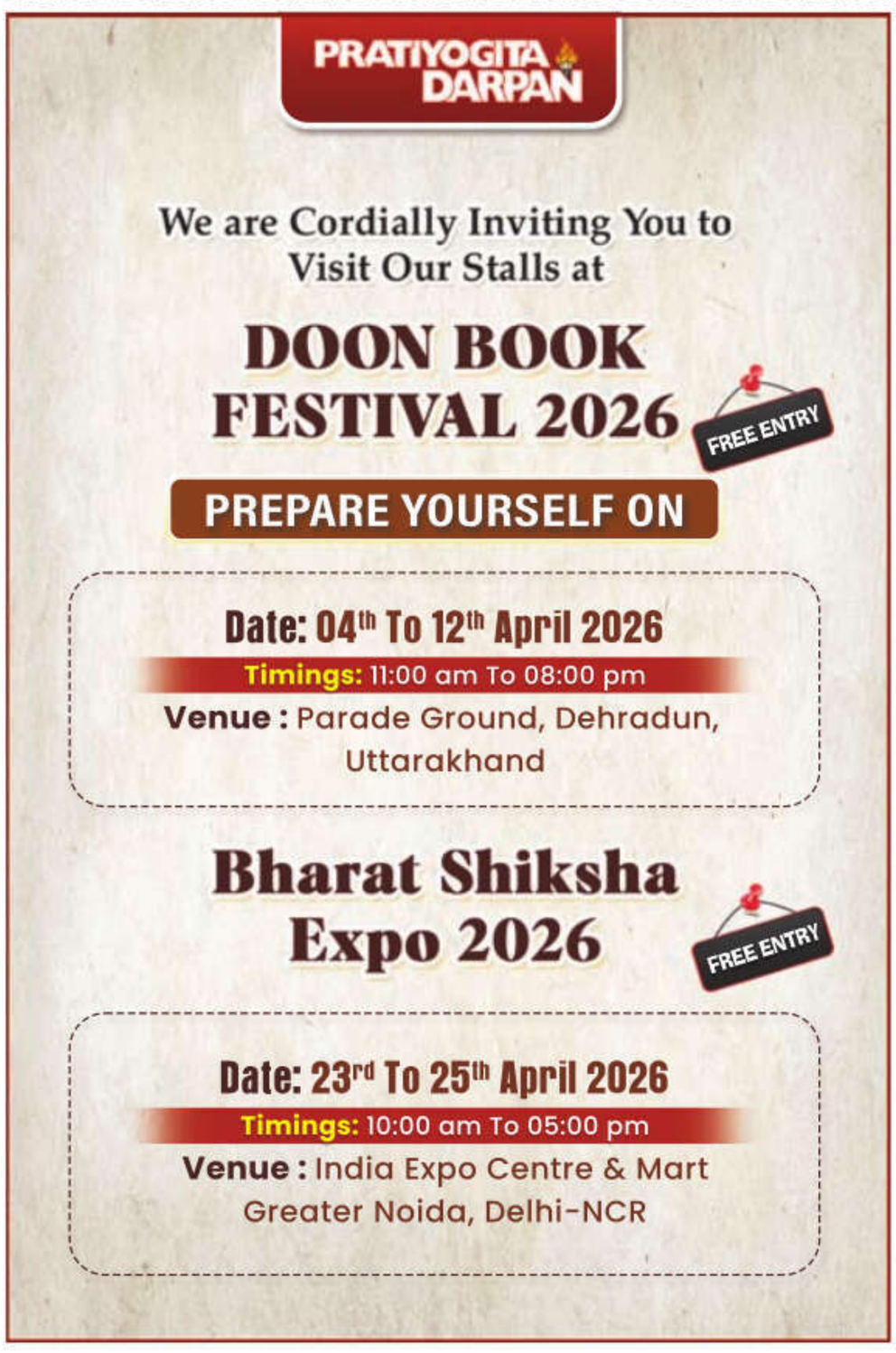
National

May	4	Coal Miners Day
May	11	National Technology Day
May	30	Hindi Journalism Day

International

May	1	International Labour Day
May	3	World Press Freedom Day
May	7	Worlds AIDS Orphans Day
May	8	World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day
May	12	International Nurses Day
May	17	World Telecommunication Day
May	18	International Museums Day
May	22	International Biodiversity Day
May	25	World Thyroid Day
May	29	International Day of UN Peace Keepers; International Mount Everest Day (Designated by Nepal)
May	31	World No-Tobacco Day

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Sports World

CRICKET

BCCI Naman Awards 2026

The BCCI Naman Awards 2026 ceremony was held in New Delhi on March 15, 2026, rewarding exceptional performances and feats from the 2024-25 season.

India's Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill received the Polly Umrigar Award for Best International Cricketer (Men) for the second time (first awarded in 2023), while Smriti Mandhana was awarded the Best International Cricketer (Women) award for the fifth time in her career.

In domestic cricket, Mumbai's Ira Jadhav received the Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy for Best Woman Cricketer (Domestic) after an impressive season. Shafali Verma was honoured as the Best Woman Cricketer in Senior Domestic One-Day tournaments.

Ayush Mhatre received the Lala Amarnath Award for Best All-Rounder in Domestic Limited-Overs Cricket and Vidarbha's Harsh Dubey won the award for Best All-Rounder in the Ranji Trophy.

The Mumbai Cricket Association was recognised for its outstanding domestic performance after winning four trophies and finishing runner-up in two tournaments during the season.

Roger Binny and Rahul Dravid received the Col. C.K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award, the highest honour given by the BCCI for exceptional service to Indian cricket. Meanwhile, former India women's captain Mithali Raj was honoured with the BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award for Women in recognition of her remarkable impact on women's cricket.

The five Indian teams which won ICC trophies were also facilitated. These included the senior men's team that won the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 and ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, the senior women's team that lifted the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025, and both the men's and women's Under-19 teams that won the ICC Under-19 World Cups.

Indian Women's Cricket Squad Nominated for Prestigious 2026 Laureus World Team of Year Award

On March 3, 2026, the Laureus Sport confirmed the nomination of the Indian women's cricket squad for the prestigious 2026 Laureus World Team of the Year Award following their maiden ICC Women's World Cup 2025 title. They have become the first women's cricket team to receive this nomination and have been nominated alongside major teams like the England Women's football team, the French Football League's Paris Saint-Germain, and McLaren Formula One.

The Indian Women's Cricket team joins a select group of Indian athletes nominated for the main Laureus categories, including Vinesh Phogat, Neeraj Chopra, and Rishabh Pant. In 2020, Sachin Tendulkar was awarded the Laureus Sporting Moment (2000-2020) award, becoming the first Indian sportsperson to win a Laureus World Sports Award. In 2024, Virat Kohli's 50th ODI century got featured in the 'epic moments' section of the 25th Laureus World Sports Awards in Madrid, Spain.

Jammu Kashmir Wins its First-ever Ranji Trophy

On February 28, 2026, Jammu Kashmir won its first-ever Ranji trophy title by defeating Karnataka in the 2025–26 season final. The Paras Dogra-led team drew against Karnataka in the final to win the title via First Innings lead, securing a historic victory on the fifth day at the KSCA Cricket Ground in Hubballi.

With this win, Jammu and Kashmir ended a 67-year wait for a Ranji Trophy title, by finishing with a 633-run lead for their first-ever domestic first-class success.

Shubham Pundir won Player of the Match in Ranji Trophy 2025-26 final. Auqib Nabi, who was instrumental in J&K's title run, was awarded the Player of the Tournament award. Nabi also became only the third pacer in the tournament's 92-year history to claim 60 wickets in a single season.

Karnataka's Ravichandran Smaran finished as the top run-getter in the 2025-26 Ranji Trophy season, scoring 950 runs in 9 matches, including four centuries. Auqib Nabi took the highest wickets, finishing the season with 60 wickets in 10 matches.

Fanny Utagushimaninde of Rwanda Becomes the Youngest Centurion Ever in Women's T20I History

On March 21, 2026, Rwanda opener Fanny Utagushimaninde became the youngest centurion ever in Women's T20I history.

Utagushimaninde, aged 15 years and 223 days, scored an unbeaten 111 off 65 balls, surpassing the previous record held by Uganda's Prosscovia Alako, who was 16 years and 233 days old when she struck 116 against Mali in Kigali in 2019. She also became the first woman to score a hundred on international debut in the format. Her unbeaten 111 was the highest score by a women's player on T20I debut, going past Australia's Karen Rolton, who scored an unbeaten 96 against England in 2005.

On the men's side, France's Gustav Mckeon holds the record as the youngest player to hit a T20 international century, achieving the feat at 18 years and 280 days.

FOOTBALL

Kushal Das, Former General Secretary of AIFF, Passes Away

On March 13, 2026, Kushal Das, former General Secretary of the All-

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India Football Federation (AIFF), passed away at the age of 66.

In November 2010, he took charge as the General Secretary of the All-India Football Federation, a position he held for more than a decade. He oversaw landmark events and structural changes that helped raise the profile of the sport in India. He also served as the Chief Financial Officer of the International Cricket Council in Dubai.

Lionel Messi Becomes Second Footballer to Score 900 Goals in Official Matches

On 18th March, 2026, Argentine footballer Lionel Messi became the second men's football player to score 900 career goals in official matches. He reached this landmark during Inter Miami CF's 1-1 draw against Nashville SC in the second leg of the CONCACAF Champions Cup in Florida.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 900th career goal on September 5, 2024, during a UEFA Nations League match against Croatia, making him the first player to reach 900 official career goals. Currently, Ronaldo has 965 goals. Messi took 1,142 games to get to 900, while Ronaldo needed 1,236 matches to reach the mark. Brazilian legend Pele occupies third place on the all-time scoring charts with 765 goals.

Sabrina Wittmann has been recently appointed the permanent head coach of German third-tier club Ingolstadt, marking the first time a female coach has been given the role with a men's team in Germany's top three national divisions.



Jannik Sinner Wins Indian Wells Open 2026

Jannik Sinner, Italian professional tennis player who is currently ranked no. 2, defeated Daniil Medvedev 7-6, 7-6 to win the men's single title of the BNP Paribas Open Indian Wells 2026 at Indian Wells Tennis Garden. This was Sinner's first title of the season and sixth career Masters 1000.

In the final of women's single title, world No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka defeated Elena Rybakina 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 to claim her first Indian Wells title after two previous runner-up finishes.

In men's double final, Guido Andreozzi and Manuel Guinard defeated Arthur Rinderknech and Valentin Vacherot. In women's double final, Katerina Siniakova and Taylor Townsend defeated Anna Danilina and Aleksandra Krunic. In mixed doubles final, Belina Bencic and Flavio Cobolli defeated Gabriela Dabrowski and Lloyd Glasspool.



India Qualifies for FIH Women's Hockey World Cup

The Indian Women's Hockey Team secured qualification for the upcoming FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium and Netherlands 2026 after finishing with a silver medal at the recently concluded FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers Hyderabad, Telangana, on March 13, 2026. India went down 0-2 to England in the Final but delivered a strong overall campaign with important victories against Uruguay, Wales and Italy.

Veteran forward Navneet Kaur played a pivotal role, finishing as the third-highest goal scorer of the tournament with four goals. She was named the 'Player of the Tournament' for her standout performances. She also scored a hattrick in India's commanding 4-1 victory over Wales.



India Open 2026 Squash Tournament

On March 22, 2026, Anahat Singh defended her Women's Single title at the India Open 2026 Squash tournament. The Men's Single title of the tournament was won by Abhay Singh.

Anahat Singh, defeated Hana Moataz of Egypt 3-1 (11-5, 11-6, 9-11, 11-6) in the women's final at the CCI Brabourne Stadium. This was her 16th PSA title overall and her second straight Indian Open triumph having beaten Helen Tang of Hong Kong China in last year's final.

Asian Games medallist Abhay Singh defeated Veer Chotrani by 3-0 (11-9, 11-8, 11-4). This was also Abhay Singh's first win in two meetings against Veer Chotrani having lost the only previous match between the two at the Open Squash Classic in 2025.



India Wins 208 Medals at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 New Delhi Leg

On March 13, 2026, India concluded its World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 New Delhi leg with highest medal tally- 208 medals (75 gold, 69 silver and 64 bronze) across field and track events. Russia finished second with 35 medals, while Bosnia and Herzegovina placed third with three medals.

Key Highlights :

- The New Delhi leg was the second stop of the 13th Grand Prix season, offering key international classification opportunities ahead of the 2026 World Para Athletics Championships and the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics.
- India secured podium sweeps in several events, including the men's shot put F57 where Shubham Juyal took gold with a 14·45-metre throw.
- In the men's 200-meter T37-T44, Rakeshbhai Bhatt clocked 25·20 seconds to lead an all-Indian podium, while Manoj Kumar Sabapathi won gold in the men's 800 meter T53-T54.
- India's double Paralympic bronze medallist Preeti Pal won her second gold of the meet in the women's 200m T35-T37.
- Sumit Antil has won gold medal in Men's Javelin throw, with a throw of 69·25 metres. Pushpendra Singh secured the silver medal with a throw of 56.91 metres, while Poonam Ram took Bronze with an effort of 49·48 metres.

Anant Rana Completes Full Ironman New Zealand in 11 Hours 50 Minutes

Athlete Anant Rana scripted history by completing the 'Full

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Ironman New Zealand' triathlon held in Taupo, New Zealand in 11 hours and 50 minutes.

He finished the 3·8 kms swimming in 1 hour 28 minutes, 180 kms cycling in 6 hours 19 minutes and the 42 kms Marathon in 3 hours 46 minutes to achieve this feat.

India to Host World Indoor Athletics Championships in 2028

On March 19, 2026, India was awarded the hosting rights of the World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028 at the World Athletics Council meeting in Torun, Poland. India will host this prestigious event for the first time in 2028 at the state-of-the-art indoor facility at the Kalinga Stadium complex in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

The World Indoor Athletics Championships 2026 took place from March 20-22, 2026 in Torun, Poland. The tournament featured 26 events – 13 each for men and women. The 4x400m mixed relay was held for the first time in this edition in Poland. No Indian athletes participated in the event.



Mayank Chakraborty Becomes First Grandmaster from North East

Mayank Chakraborty from Assam became the first player from the North East region to gain the Grandmaster status, becoming the 94th Chess Grandmaster from India, after scoring his final norms during the 8th GM Tournament at the Hotel Stockholm North.

He went on to win the tournament with a rating performance of 2670. He scored 7·0/9, finishing one point ahead of the entire field, which in turn took his live rating to 2508.

Prague International Chess Festival 2026

The Prague International Chess Festival was held in the Czech Republic from February 25, 2026-March 7, 2026. It was supported by the European Chess Union.

The Prague Chess Masters tournament was the highlight of the festival, gathering ten world-class grandmasters who competed for the title. After nine played rounds, GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan emerged as the sole winner of the event with the score of 6 points. Abdusattorov finished a full point ahead of GM Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran, GM Aravindh Chithambaram of India and GM Jorden Van Foreest of Netherlands who tied for the second place.

Aravindh Chithambaram claimed joint second with 5 points after beating Czech Grandmaster David Navara in the final round.

In the Challengers section, India's Divya Deshmukh defeated Czech player Hrbek Stepan to secure third place with 5 points. 16-year-old IM Vavlav Finek won the Challengers tournament with the score of 6·5 points.



All England Open 2026 : Lakshya Sen Finishes Runner-up

On March 8, 2026, India's Lakshya Sen settled for runner-up title after losing to Lin Chun-Yi in straight games in the Men's Singles final of the All England Open 2026. It's the first All England Open title for the 26-year-old Lin, and his first triumph in a Super 1000 event. It was also the second title for Lin, who had earlier won the India Open in January, 2026.

In the Women's Singles final, Wang Zhiyi of the People's Republic of China was crowned champion. She defeated world No.1 An Seyoung in straight games, sealing a 21–15, 21–19 victory.



Australian Grand Prix 2026

The Formula 1 Qatar Airways Australian Grand Prix 2026 was held on March 8, 2026, at Melbourne in Australia. George Russell (Mercedes) won the Australian Grand Prix with a commanding drive from pole, with Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes) second and Charles Leclerc (Ferrar) third.

After a battle with Ferrari, Mercedes secured a 1-2 finish at the Australian Grand Prix, with George Russell leading home team mate Kimi Antonelli.



India Wins Five Medals at the World Boxing Futures Cup 2026

On March 15, 2026, India concluded its World Boxing Futures Cup 2026 campaign in Bangkok with five medals, including one gold. Chandrika Pujari defeated Uzbekistan's Mardonova Nazokat in the final in the women's 51-kg category.

Three Indian boxers finished with silver medals after reaching the finals in their respective categories-Gunjan (women's 48-kg category), Joyshree Devi (women's 54 kg) and Ambekar Meetei (men's 50-kg category). Radhamani Longjam (women's 57 kg) settled for bronze medal in her semi-final contest against Ukraine's Yevanhelina Petruk.

The World Boxing Futures Cup 2026 was held in Bangkok from March 8-15, 2026, which was part of the qualification pathway for 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Senegal, which will be the first Olympic event to be held on African soil and will take place from October 31 to November 13, 2026.



India to Host Asia Cup Archery 2027

India is set to host a top international archery competition for the first time in 22 years, with Delhi being awarded the second leg of the Asia Cup in 2027. The country last staged a major international archery tournament when the Asian Archery Championships were held in Delhi in 2005.

Ahmedabad will host the Asian Para Archery Championships in September this year. Kolkata has been awarded to host the South Asian Archery Championships 2026.

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India Wins Its Third ICC Men's T20 World Cup Title



On March 8, 2026, India scripted history by winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup title (10th edition) for a record third time, beating New Zealand by 96 runs in the final match at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Chasing a massive target of 256 runs set by the Suryakumar Yadav-led Indian team, the New Zealand got out for just 159 runs in 19 overs. Jasprit Bumrah bagged the highest 4 wickets and was adjudged Player of the Match. The 96-run win against New Zealand was biggest win margin in the men's T20I tournament finals.

The victory ensured India became the first team to defend their T20 World Cup title, the first to triumph at a home championship, and the first to win three T20 World Cup titles. For New Zealand, it was their fifth straight defeat, in 11 years, in the final of an ICC white-ball world event.

This was India's fifth World Cup triumph, including two in ODIs and three in T20Is. Following the victory, the Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI) announced a cash reward of ₹ 131 crore for the Indian squad that won the ICC Men's T20 World Cup title.

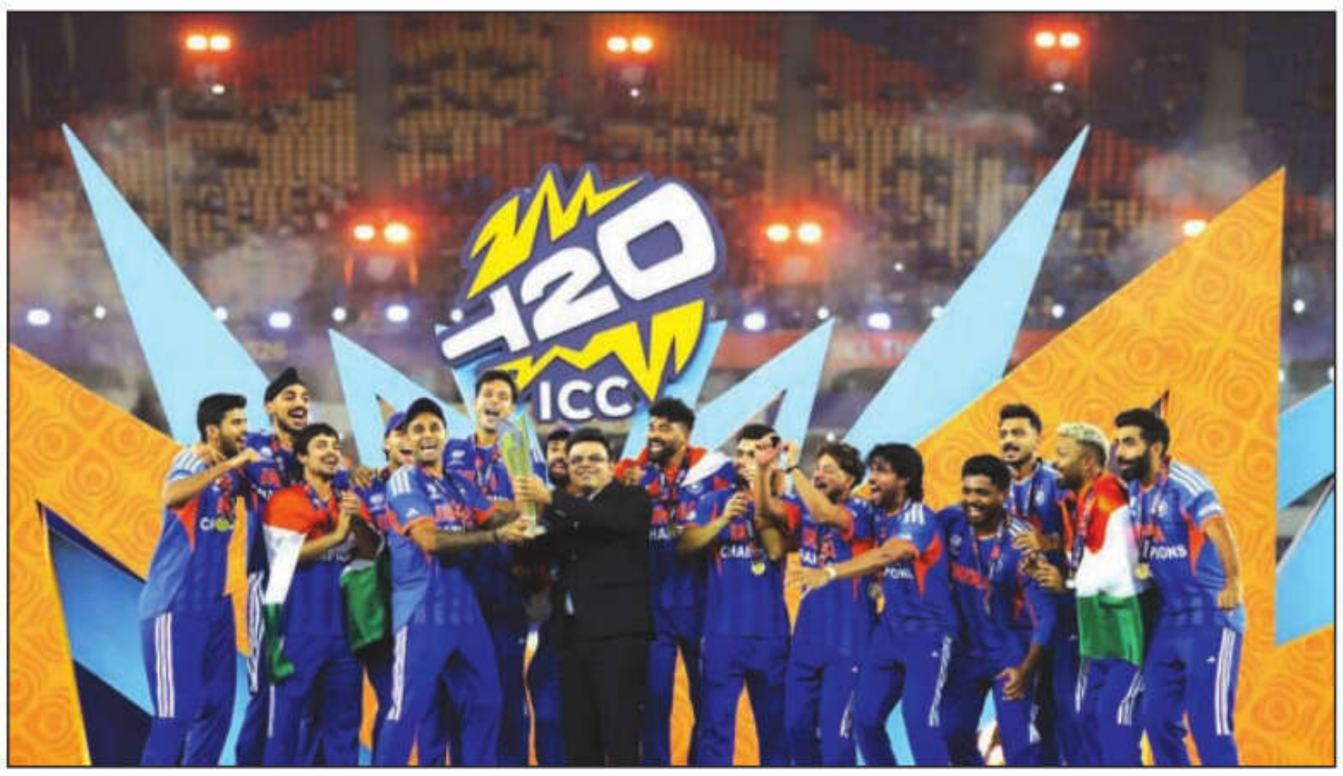
List of Records Created During the Tournament :

- Sanju Samson became the third Indian to be named Player of the Tournament in the ICC T20 World Cup after Virat Kohli (2014 and 2016) and Jasprit Bumrah (2024). He registered the highest individual score in a T20 World Cup final as he made 89 against New Zealand.
- Sanju Samson hit 24 sixes through the tournament, the most in a single T20 World Cup edition.
- Samson also became only the second batter, after Mahela Jayawardene in 2010, to score three successive 80+ scores in the T20 World Cup.
- Jaspreet Bumrah's 4/15 in four overs was the first time that a bowler had claimed a four-wicket haul in a T20 World Cup final.
- India's score against New Zealand was the highest total in a T20 World Cup final, and the highest in any T20I knockout or playoff match. India became the first team to register two 250+ scores in a row. They had made 253/7 against England in the semi-final. This was India's third total over 250 in the tournament – they also put up 256/4 against Zimbabwe which was the highest team total at T20World Cup 2026.
- During their epic semi-final, India and England registered the highest match aggregate at T20 World Cups by piling 499 runs while India posted 253/7, England just fell short to wrap up at 246/7. It was also the second highest match aggregate in T20I history.
- Abhishek Sharma brought up his half-century in the final against New Zealand in just 18 balls, making it the fastest of this edition and the fastest in a T20 World Cup knockout game.
- Team India hit 106 sixes in the tournament, the first time that a team had hit over 100 sixes in a T20I event.
- Zimbabwe's Brian Bennett scored 292 runs at an average of 146.00 during the 2026 tournament. Not out in four of the six innings he played, Bennett now holds the highest average at a T20 World Cup.
- India's Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakravarthy topped the most wickets in T20 World Cup 2026 list with 14 scalps each.

P.Darpan

ICC Men's T20 World Cup Winners List

Year	Winner	Runners-Up	Hosts
2007	India	Pakistan	South Africa
2009	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	England
2010	England	Australia	West Indies
2012	West Indies	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
2014	Sri Lanka	India	Bangladesh
2016	West Indies	England	India
2021	Australia	New Zealand	UAE and Oman
2022	England	Pakistan	Australia
2024	India	South Africa	USA and West Indies
2026	India	New Zealand	India and Sri Lanka



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Regional News

ANDHRA PRADESH

Project HANUMAN

On March 3, 2026, Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Forest & Environment Pawan Kalyan launched the 'Hanuman' Project in Mangalagiri near Vijayawada. Project HANUMAN (Healing and Nurturing Units for Monitoring, Aid and Nursing of Wildlife) has been designed as a comprehensive scientific and technological intervention to protect both wildlife and people living in forest fringe villages. It aims at reducing human–wildlife conflict and strengthening wildlife conservation.

As part of the launch, over 100 specially designed rapid response and rescue vehicles were flagged off. Of these, 93 are Rapid Response and Rescue Vehicles, while seven are fully equipped ambulances to provide medical aid to injured wild animals. The system also includes four Wildlife Rescue and Treatment Centres at Visakhapatnam, Rajamahendravaram, Tirupati and Byrluti, along with 19 rapid response teams stationed across the State.

At the village level, 'Vajra' teams trained wildlife protectors—are being formed and equipped with rescue kits to handle incidents involving snakes and other animals locally. The ex gratia amount for deaths due to wild animal attacks has been increased from ₹ 5 lakh to ₹ 10 lakh, while compensation for injuries has been raised to ₹ 2 lakh.

'Araku Kouni', State's First Tribal Millet-Based Food Menu

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu launched 'Araku Kouni', the first tribal millet-based food menu of the State, on March 12, 2026. The initiative marks a major step in integrating traditional millet-based diets into mainstream food culture while celebrating the State's rich tribal culinary heritage.

The 'Araku Kouni' menu features authentic tribal recipes sourced directly from the indigenous communities of Alluri Sitarama Raju (ASR) district.

The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) will introduce 'Araku Kouni' in all Haritha restaurants across ASR district and it will also be extend to other tourism chains in the State.

GUJARAT

Lake and Air Watch Initiative

Gujarat Government's 'Lake and Air Watch' initiative aims for real-time monitoring and improvement of lake health and air quality across cities. It is aligned with the Gujarat Urban Development Mission to promote climate resilience and sustainable urban development.

Key Highlights :

- The Gujarat Urban Development Mission (GUDM) will develop an integrated, digital and real-time platform to track lake health and air quality across cities.
- Satellite technology will analyse lake area, waste presence and algae growth. Based on that, timely alerts will be issued to enable conservation action., Air quality monitoring stations will be installed in 17 municipal corporations and 152 municipal areas, providing real-time Air Quality Index (AQI) information.
- The platform will provide maps, trends, s and operational status, ensuring better inter-departmental coordination and timely action. The information will also be shared transparently with citizens for public awareness.

Gujarat Marks Milestone in Space Research with First Sounding Rocket at Dholera

Gujarat has marked a historic milestone in the space research sector with the successful launch of the State's first sounding rocket at Dholera on March 14, 2026.

Carried out by the Ahmedabad-based startup OmSpace Rocket and Exploration (OSRE), this single-stage sub-orbital rocket lifted off from a temporary launch complex, reaching an altitude of approximately 3 km.

The rocket also carried a mini-satellite designed to collect essential weather data. Under the 'Make in India' initiative, the rocket's airframe was developed using carbon fiber and advanced composites at the startup's laboratory in Ahmedabad. This launch was conducted under the authorization of IN-SPACe and supported by the Gujarat Spacetech Policy 2025-2030.

JHARKHAND

Jharkhand Government Tables ₹ 1·58 Lakh Crore Budget for FY2026-27

On February 24, 2026, the Finance Minister of Jharkhand, Shri Radha Krishna Kishore, tabled in the Assembly a ₹ 1·58 lakh crore budget for the 2026-27 fiscal.

Budget Highlights :

- The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Jharkhand for 2026-27 (at current prices) is projected to be ₹ 6,24,868 crore, amounting to growth of 10% over the previous year.
- Expenditure (excluding debt repayment) in 2026-27 is estimated to be ₹ 1,50,106 crore, an increase of 6%

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over the revised estimate for 2025-26. In addition, debt of ₹ 8,454 crore will be repaid by the State.

- Receipts (excluding borrowings) for 2026-27 are estimated to be ₹ 1,36,510 crore, an increase of 9% as compared to the revised estimate for 2025-26.
- Revenue surplus in 2026-27 is estimated to be 2·5% of GSDP (₹ 15,358 crore), higher than revised estimate for 2025-26 (1·7% of GSDP). In 2025-26, revenue surplus is expected to be lower than initial budget estimate (2·6% of GSDP).
- Fiscal deficit for 2026-27 is targeted at 2·2% of GSDP (₹ 13,596 crore). In 2025-26, as per the revised estimates, fiscal deficit is expected to be 2·9% of GSDP, higher than the budgeted (2% of GSDP).

Policy Highlights :

- **Abua Davakhana :** The State government aims to open 750 pharmacies across the state to provide affordable and quality medicines.
- **Cancer Diagnostics :** PET & CT scan machines will be installed in all five government medical college hospitals across the state.
- **Mahila Kisan Khushali Yojana :** The State government seeks to provide women farmers with modern technical support and access to online and offline marketing platforms.
- **J-PRAGATI :** All 23 State polytechnic institutions will be revamped and upgraded into Jharkhand Institutes of Technology, modelled after IITs and NITs.
- **STEM Education :** Various programmes will be launched to encourage STEM education in the State.
- **Establishment of Universities :** The State government will establish Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University in Chatra district.

Jharkhand's Economy

- In 2024-25, Jharkhand's GSDP (at constant prices) is estimated to grow by 7% over the previous year.
- In 2024-25, Jharkhand's per capita GSDP (at current prices) is estimated to be ₹ 1,28,253, an increase of 10% over 2023-24.
- In 2024-25, agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors are estimated to contribute 23%, 32% and 45% of Jharkhand's economy, respectively (at current prices).

Budget Estimates for 2026-27

- Total revenue receipts for 2026-27 are estimated to be ₹ 1,36,210 crore, an increase of 9% over the revised estimate for 2025-26. Of this, ₹ 66,699 crore (49%) will be raised by the State through its own resources and ₹ 69,511 crore (51%) will come from the centre.
- Jharkhand's total own tax revenue is estimated to be ₹ 45,999 crore in 2026-27, an increase of 10% over the revised estimate for 2025-26. Own tax revenue as a percentage of GSDP is estimated at 7·4% in 2026-27.
- Jharkhand's total own non-tax revenue is estimated to be ₹ 20,700 crore in 2026-27, an increase of 4% from the revised estimate for 2025-26 (19,880 crore).
- Grants from the centre in 2026-27 are estimated at ₹ 18,274 crore, an increase of 7% over the revised estimates for 2025-26. Grants in 2026-27 are almost double the actual amount for 2024-25 (₹ 9,199 crore).
- In 2026-27, the State's share in central taxes is estimated at ₹ 51,237 crore, an increase of 11% over the revised estimate for 2025-26.

Expenditure in 2026-27

- Revenue expenditure for 2026-27 is proposed to be ₹ 1,20,852 crore, an increase of 5% over the revised estimate for 2025-26.
- Capital outlay for 2026-27 is proposed to be ₹ 24,791 crore, an increase of 11% over the revised estimate for 2025-26. In 2026-27, capital outlay is estimated to be 4% of GSDP.
- In 2026-27, loans and advances by the State are expected to be ₹ 4,463 crore, a 22% increase over 2025-26 revised estimates.
- In 2026-27, Jharkhand is estimated to spend ₹ 38,456 crore on committed expenditure, which is 28% of its estimated revenue receipts. This comprises spending on salaries (16% of revenue receipts), pension (7%) and interest payments (5%).

Scheme-wise Allocation under Madhya Pradesh Budget 2026-27

- Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana has been allocated ₹ 14,066 crore.
- Mukhyamantri Sarvajan Pension Yojana has been allocated ₹ 3,517 crore.
- ₹ 4,100 crore has been allocated towards Abua Awas Yojana.
- ₹ 2,638 crore has been allocated towards MGNREGA.
- Sarva Siksha Abhiyan has been allocated ₹ 2,093 crore.
- District police have been allocated ₹ 4,158 crore.
- ₹ 2,250 crore has been allocated towards special police (such as for panchayat elections).
- ₹ 2,094 crore has been allocated towards National Health Mission.
- ₹ 5,405 crore has been allocated towards power tariff subsidies for consumers.
- ₹ 6,000 crore has been allocated towards capital outlay on roads and bridges, of which ₹ 5,700 crore has been allocated for State highways.
- For capital outlay on agriculture and allied activities, ₹ 1,115 crore has been allocated.
- The State Horticulture Development Scheme has been allocated ₹ 246 crore.
- ₹ 3,455 crore has been allocated towards Jal Jeevan Mission.
- ₹ 658 crore has been allocated towards PM Awas Yojana-Urban.
- ₹ 220 crore has been allocated as grants to urban local bodies for civic amenities.

KERALA

Nirbhaya Nisha Project

On the occasion of the International Women's Day (March 8, 2026), the Kerala Police launched Nirbhaya Nisha Project to address safety challenges faced by

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women who travel at night using public transport for work, education, medical needs and personal or family-related purposes. The service will operate between 9:00 pm and 5:00 am.

As part of the initiative, *safety poles* equipped with AI-enabled cameras and alarm panic buttons will be installed at those locations where women travel frequently. It will help identifying offenders in crowded locations and draw public attention during emergencies.

On February 24, 2026, the Union Cabinet approved the Kerala government's proposal to change the State's name from 'Kerala' to 'Keralam'. The proposed bill–The Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026–will be referred to Kerala Legislative Assembly for its views under Article 3 of the Constitution.

MADHYA PRADESH

Madhya Pradesh State Budget 2026-27

The Deputy Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Jagdish Devda, presented the State Budget for the financial year 2026-27 on February 18, 2026.

Key Highlights :

- The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Madhya Pradesh for 2026-27 (at current prices) is projected to be ₹ 18,48,274 crore, amounting to growth of 11% over the revised estimates for 2025-26.
- Expenditure (excluding debt repayment) in 2026-27 is estimated to be ₹ 3,88,923 crore, an increase of 10% from the revised estimate for 2025-26. In addition, debt of ₹ 34,437 crore will be repaid by the state.
- Receipts (excluding borrowings) for 2026-27 are estimated to be ₹ 3,17,465 crore, an increase of 14% over the revised estimate for 2025-26.
- Revenue surplus in 2026-27 is estimated to be ₹ 44 crore, marginally higher than the revised estimate for 2025-26 (₹ 7 crore). In 2025-26, revenue surplus is estimated to be 99% lower than budgeted (₹ 618 crore).
- Fiscal deficit for 2026-27 is targeted at 3·9% of GSDP (₹ 71,458 crore). In 2025-26, as per the revised estimates, fiscal deficit is expected to be 4·5% of GSDP, lower than the budgeted (4·7% of GSDP).

- Madhya Pradesh's 'women-centric' budget imposed no new taxes.
- The Budget is framed on the GYANII model- Garib Kalyan (poor), Yuva Shakti (youth), Annadata (farmers), Nari Shakti (women empowerment), Infrastructure and Industry.
- 'Rolling budget' provision introduced for the first time for carrying forward funds to the next fiscal.
- ₹ 3,600 crore allocated for Simhastha Kumbh to be held in Ujjain in 2028.
- 1 lakh farmers would be provided with solar pumps.
- 5,700 hostels would be constructed for working women.
- ₹ 1,335 crore has been proposed for the Labour Department, ₹ 12,690 crore for road repairs and ₹ 4,454 crore for the Jal Jeevan Mission.

Policy Highlights :

- **Promoting Industrialisation :** Industrial parks will be developed across the State. A telecom manufacturing zone is being established in Gwalior. The Indore-Pithampur Economic Corridor is being developed with an estimated cost of ₹ 2,360 crore.
- **Infrastructure Development :** The Dwarka Scheme is being launched for infrastructure development in cities. The State government will spend ₹ 5,000 crore on this scheme over the next three years.
- **Social Impact Bond :** The State's first Social Impact Bond is set to be listed on the National Stock Exchange.
- **Space Technology :** The government aims to implement the Madhya Pradesh Space Tech Policy 2026 to lead the State into the space sector.

Madhya Pradesh's Economy

- In 2024-25, Madhya Pradesh's GSDP (at constant prices) is estimated to grow by 6% over the previous year.
- In 2024-25, Madhya Pradesh's per capita GSDP (at current prices) is estimated to be ₹ 1,70,430, an increase of 10% over 2023-24.
- In 2024-25, agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors are estimated to contribute 44%, 19% and 37% of Madhya Pradesh's economy, respectively (at current prices).

Budget Estimates for 2026-27

- Revenue expenditure for 2026-27 is proposed to be ₹ 3,08,659 crore, an increase of 11% over the revised estimate of 2025-26. This includes the expenditure on salaries, pension, interest, grants and subsidies.
- Capital outlay for 2026-27 is proposed to be ₹ 78,920 crore, an increase of 8% from the revised estimate of 2025-26. Capital outlay indicates the expenditure towards creation of assets. In 2025-26, capital outlay is expected to be 11% lower than budgeted.
- In 2026-27, Madhya Pradesh is estimated to spend ₹ 1,37,826 crore on committed expenditure, which is 45% of its estimated revenue receipts. This comprises spending on salaries (24·5% of revenue receipts), pension (9·2%) and interest payments (10·9%).
- Total revenue receipts for 2026-27 are estimated to be ₹ 3,08,703 crore, an increase of 11% over the revised estimate of 2025-26. Of this, ₹ 1,42,061 crore (46%) will be raised by the State through its own resources and ₹ 1,66,642 crore (54%) will come from the centre.
- Madhya Pradesh's total own tax revenue is estimated to be ₹ 1,17,667 crore in 2026-27, an increase of 18% over the revised estimate of 2025-26. Own tax revenue as a percentage of GSDP is estimated at 6·4% in 2026-27, higher than the revised estimates for 2025-26 (6%).
- Grants from the centre in 2026-27 are estimated at ₹ 54,505 crore, an increase of 20% over the revised estimates for 2025-26.
- In 2026-27, the State's share in central taxes is estimated at ₹ 1,12,137 crore, an increase of 3% over the revised estimate of 2025-26.

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Scheme-wise Allocation under Madhya Pradesh Budget 2026-27

- ₹ 5,649 crore has been allocated towards Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.
- Ladli Behna Yojana has been allocated ₹ 23,883 crore.
- ₹ 6,033 crore has been allocated towards Atal Griha Jyoti Scheme.
- ₹ 4,600 crore has been allocated towards the National Health Mission.
- VB G-RAM-G has been allocated ₹ 10,428 crore.
- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Beema Yojana has been allocated ₹ 1,299 crore.
- ₹ 11,546 crore has been allocated towards capital outlay on irrigation and flood control.
- PM Awas Yojana-Urban has been allocated ₹ 2,301 crore.
- ₹ 9,910 crore has been allocated to capital outlay on roads and bridges.
- ₹ 7,261 crore has been allocated towards district police.

MIZORAM

Mizoram Takes Step Towards Official Recognition of Mizo Language

On March 9, 2026, Mizoram State Legislative Assembly unanimously adopted an official resolution seeking inclusion of Mizo language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The move aims to reinforce the State's longstanding demand for recognition of its lingua franca, spoken by various Mizo tribes. The first resolution seeking Mizo's inclusion in the Eighth Schedule was adopted on March 23, 1991. The language was declared Mizoram's official language in 1974.

The inclusion would allow Members of Parliament from Mizoram to speak in their mother tongue in Parliament, enable Mizo students to appear in premier Central Service examinations like IAS, IPS and IES using the language and boost literary and cultural initiatives through the National Translation Mission, Sahitya Akademi and the National Book Trust. It would also create employment opportunities for translators and interpreters and expand Mizo-language programming on All India Radio and Doordarshan.

According to the 2011 Census, Mizo speakers are spread across 26 States and 7 Union Territories of India, and it is believed that Mizo speakers are now present in all States of the country. As per the Census, the number of Mizo speakers in Mizoram stood at 8,30,846, a figure believed to have increased substantially since then. Some scholars estimate that the total number of Mizo speakers worldwide has now exceeded 2·2 million. At present, there are demands for inclusion of 38 more languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution.

LADAKH

Holistic Homestay Support Framework Launched

On March 5, 2026, the Ladakh Tourism Department launched the Holistic Homestay Support Framework which introduces a comprehensive 21-day training curriculum for operators of Homestay owners, which is framed to upskill their operational skills. It will promote responsible community-driven tourism and conversion of homestay into micro rural enterprise for employment generation. Earlier, the Union Government had approved the creation of three clusters of homestays in Ladakh under the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan.

TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu Launches its First Dark Sky Park

In February 2026, the Tamil Nadu government launched the State's first Dark Sky Park at the Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest in Kolli Hills, Namakkal district.

Kolli Hills, with its elevated terrain, dense forest cover and low urban light disturbance, offers ideal conditions for night-sky preservation and astronomical observation.

According to the Forest Department, the park is equipped with three advanced telescopes for structured sky-watching sessions and solar panels to power onsite operations sustainably. The facility will also function during daytime hours to promote scientific literacy and awareness on astronomy among students, researchers and the public. Structured stargazing sessions will be organised regularly and accommodation will be available at Agaya Gangai eco-huts.

TRIPURA

India's First State Innovation Mission Launched in Tripura

On 26th February, 2026, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), under NITI Aayog, launched the first State Innovation Mission (SIM) in Tripura, marking a significant step towards embedding Innovation and Entrepreneurship into the State's long-term development framework.

The State Innovation Mission is part of the approved AIM 2·0 programme, under the aegis of NITI Aayog's State Support Mission (SSM) and is designed as a long-term institutional mechanism to support States and Union Territories in building robust, inclusive and context-specific innovation ecosystems aligned with national priorities and local strengths.

As part of the launch, the SIM framework for Tripura was outlined, including the institutionalization of SIM under the Tripura Institution for Transformation (TIFT), the inauguration of T-NEST (Tripura–Nurturing Entrepreneurship and Startups) as a dedicated incubation and innovation facility to incubate startups and promote 'Make from Tripura' solutions; along with the creation of Innovation Centres in each of the 8 district linked to T-NEST to promote innovation among women and tribal communities.

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UTTAR PRADESH

Project Ganga

In March 2026, Uttar Pradesh's State Transformation Commission (STC) and One OTT Entertainment Limited (OIL), a subsidiary of the Hinduja Group, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for enabling high-speed broadband connectivity will reach over 20 lakh households across Uttar Pradesh over the next two to three years under 'Project GANGA.'

The initiative aims to expand digital connectivity across rural and semi-urban areas while generating more than 1 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities in the State.

Under the project, 8,000 to 10,000 local entrepreneurs at the Nyaya Panchayat level will be developed as Digital Service Providers (DSPs), who will deliver high-speed broadband and other digital services in villages.

The government has also set a target of around 50% participation of women among these digital entrepreneurs, aimed at promoting women-led entrepreneurship in rural areas. Project Ganga will help reduce the digital divide and bring broadband connectivity and digital services to villages, making sectors such as telemedicine, online education, e-commerce, digital skilling and content creation to expand rapidly with improved connectivity.

Tripartite MoU Signed to Support UP Clean Air Plan

On March 16, 2026, the World Bank, the Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh signed an agreement to support the Uttar Pradesh (UP) Clean Air Management Programme ($ 299·66 million), focussing on clean air transition across key sectors like transport, agriculture and industry with clean air benefits spilling over to other States. Almost 200 new air quality monitors will be installed with data received from the U.P. Pollution Control Board.

The programme, part of the World Bank's Regional Air Quality Management Programme in the Indo-Gangetic Plains and Himalayan Foothills (IGP-HF), will also help 3·9 million households gain access to clean cooking. More than 700 brick kilns will transition to resource-efficient technology. Farmers will adopt efficient fertilizer use to improve crop productivity in the State.

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Globally, one in five (20·7%) children aged five to 19 worldwide are living with obesity and are overweight. By 2040, a total of 507 million children will be living with obesity or be overweight. By 2040, it is estimated that more than 57 million children will show early signs of cardiovascular disease (high triglycerides), while over 43 million will show signs of hypertension.

Preventable Actions Needed

The World Obesity Federation calls for following actions :

- Marketing restrictions (including digital marketing) and sugar levies on packaged food products.
- Restrictions on marketing packaged foods to children.
- Strict implementation of global physical activity recommendations for children.
- Ensuring the mandatory breastfeeding period for infants and healthier school food standards.
- Integration of prevention and care into primary health systems.

Indian Railways Launch 'SHINE' to Empower Women at Workplace

On March 8, 2026, the Indian Railways' Sexual Harassment Incident Notification for Empowerment (SHINE) was made operational, which is a customised app for women employees to lodge complaints about sexual harassment at the workplace.

SHINE also allows reporting incidents or complaints on behalf of outsiders (visitors), contractual staff, students and others who may not have access to the app. It would maintain confidentiality and address issues brought to the notice of the authorities concerned effectively. The app could be accessed through the 'Employee Self Service' system.

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Employment And Career News

Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC)

Invites online application for the 33rd Judicial Services examination for the posts of Civil Judges (Junior Branch).

Last Date to Apply : 30th April, 2026.

Number of Posts : 173. Reservation of posts as per the norms specified in the official notification.

Minimum and Maximum Age : Minimum age limit of the candidates should be more than 22 years as on 01.08.2025 and the maximum age limit should be less than 35 years as on 01.08.2022. However, for reserved category candidates (including women and orthopedically handicapped category) and unreserved category female candidates, the age should be less than 40 years and more than 22 years on the said date. The retirement age of judicial officers will be 60 years.

Educational Qualifications : Candidates must have a Bachelor's Degree in Law (LLB) or an equivalent qualification from a university or institution recognized by the Bar Council of India, New Delhi.

Candidates must have a minimum of three (3) years of experience in legal practice at the Bar as on the date of advertisement. The period of experience shall be calculated from the date of provisional enrollment/ registration with the concerned State Bar Council.

Basis of Selection : Selection for appointment will be made on the basis of marks obtained in the written (main) examination and interview. In case of a significant increase in the number of candidates, a preliminary examination will be conducted. For Prelims, the minimum qualifying marks for unreserved category candidates will be 45% and for reserved category candidates the minimum qualifying marks will be 40%.

How to Apply : To apply online, it is mandatory to do One Time Registration (OTR) on the website of Bihar Public Service Commission- https://bpsconline.bihar. gov.in

Uttar Pradesh Education Service Selection Commission

Invites online application for Uttar Pradesh Teacher Eligibility Test (UP TET)

Last Date to Apply : 26th April, 2026.

Exam Date : 2nd-4th July, 2026.

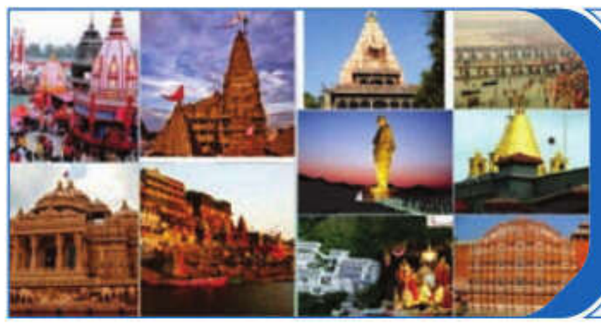
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FORTHCOMING COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS, 2026

- SSC CHSL (10+2) Level Exam. (Tier-II), 2025 (10 April)
- AIIMS Nursing Officer Recruitment Common Eligibility Test, 2026 (Stage-I) (11 April)
- RBI Bank Assistant Recruitment (Prelims) Exam., 2026 (11 April)
- NDA & NA Exam., (I), 2026 (12 April)
- Combined Defence Service Exam., (I), 2026 (12 April)
- BPSC Assistant Education Development Officer Recruitment Exam., 2025 (14-21 April)
- RSSB Agriculture Supervisor Recruitment Exam., 2026 (18 April)
- RPSC Veterinary Officer Exam., 2025 (19 April)
- Uttar Pradesh Home Guards Recruitment Exam., 2025 (25-27 April)
- BPSC 71st Mains Exam., 2026 (25-30 April)
- Madhya Pradesh Civil Service and State Forest Service Preliminary Exam., 2026 (26 April)
- Haryana Civil Services (Prelims) Exam., 2026 (26 April)
- Indian Navy SSR Medical Recruitment Exam., 2026 (May)
- MPESB Pre. Agriculture Test, 2026 (From 8 May)
- Uttar Pradesh Lecturer (PGT) Recruitment Exam., 2022 (9-10 May)
- RSSB Lab Assistant and Junior Assistant Recruitment Exam., 2026 (10 May)
- NTA CUET UG Entrance Test, 2026 (11-31 May)
- Bihar ITI CAT Exam., 2026 (17 May)
- MPPSC Assistant Registrar Exam., 2025 (17 May)
- UPSSSC Lekhpal Recruitment Exam., 2025 (21 May)
- UPSC Civil Services (Pre.) Exam., 2026 (24 May)
- Combined Graduate Level (CGL) Examination (Tier-I), 2026 (May-June)
- Indian Army Agniveer CEE Recruitment Exam., 2026 (1-16 June)
- Uttar Pradesh Trained Graduate Teacher (TGT) Recruitment Exam., 2022 (3-4 June)
- MPPSC Unani Medical Officer Recruitment Exam., 2025 (7 June)
- UP Police Constable Recruitment Exam., 2025 (8-10 June)
- Haryana Civil Services (Mains) Exam., 2026 (27-29 June)
- RSSB Forester or Forest Ranger Recruitment Exam., 2026 (28 June)
- UP Teachers Eligibility Test, 2025 (2-4 July)
- Rajasthan Grade-2 Lecturer Recruitment Exam., 2025 (12-18 July)
- MPPSC Assistant Professor Exam., 2026 (Phase-I) (12 July)
- Central Armed Police Forces (Assistant Commandant) Exam., 2026 (19 July)
- MPPSC Assistant Professor Exam., 2026 (Phase-II) (2 Aug.)
- Civil Services (Main) Exam., 2026 (From 21 Aug.)
- SSC Combined Higher Secondary (10+2) Level Examination (Tier-I), 2026 (July-Sept.)
- NDA & NA (Exam. (II), 2026 (13 Sept.)
- Combined Defence Service Exam. (II) (13 Sept.)
- MPPSC Assistant Town Planner Recruitment Exam., 2026 (20 Sept.)
- MPPSC State Forest Service (Main) Exam., 2026 (27 Sept.)
- MPPSC Assistant District Public Prosecutor Exam., 2026 (18 Oct.)

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Memorable Points

NATIONAL

- The Union Government aims for universal health insurance coverage by **—2033**
  - ☞ On March 17, 2026, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in Rajya Sabha that health insurance is the priority of the government and it is working towards providing insurance coverage for all by 2033. India's per capita insurance premium stands at just 97 dollars, including health insurance, against a global average of 943 dollars.
- The closing ceremony of the Exercise MILAN 2026 was conducted onboard **—INS Vikrant**
  - ☞ Exercise MILAN 2026, the Indian Navy's premier multilateral maritime exercise, culminated on 25 February, 2026 with a closing ceremony conducted onboard India's indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, off the coast of Visakhapatnam. Held under the theme 'Camaraderie, Cooperation, Collaboration', MILAN 2026 witnessed participation on an unprecedented scale, comprising 42 ships and submarines and 29 aircraft. These also included 18 ships from the participating Friendly Foreign Countries.
- Who recently took additional charge as NITI Aayog CEO ? **—Nidhi Chhibber**
  - ☞ As on February 24, 2026, Nidhi Chhibber, a 1994-batch IAS officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre, took additional charge as the NITI Aayog Chief Executive Officer (CEO), succeeding B.V.R. Subrahmanyam. She has previously served as the Chairperson of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). She is also currently the Director General of the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office of NITI Aayog.
- PM Narendra Modi released the 22nd installment of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi from **—Guwahati**
  - ☞ On March 13, 2026, PM Narendra Modi released the 22nd installment of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi from Guwahati in Assam. With the release of ₹ 18,640 crore in 22nd installment, the total amount released under the scheme exceeded ₹ 4·27 lakh crore. It is a Central Sector scheme, launched in 2018, which provides income support of ₹ 6,000 per year in three equal installments to all land holding farmer families.
- Recently, ISRO conducted a sea level hot test of which engine ? **—Cryogenic engine (CE20)**
  - ☞ ISRO successfully conducted a sea level hot test of its Cryogenic Engine (CE20) at 22 tonne thrust using nozzle protection system and multi-element igniter, on March 10, 2026 at ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri. The CE20 cryogenic engine powers the upper cryogenic stage of LVM3 launch vehicle. Earlier, the sea level tests utilizing nozzle protection system was being carried out at 19 tonne thrust level.
- What was the theme of Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems 2026 ? **—Driving Progress, Attaining New Heights**
  - ☞ The three-day Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems 2026, inaugurated by President Droupadi Murmu, was held under the theme 'Driving Progress, Attaining New Heights' at ICAR Convention Centre in New Delhi from March 12-14, 2026. The conference aimed to promote gender-responsive policymaking, technological innovation and inclusive agricultural development.
- DRDO jointly conducted four successful in-flight release trials of the indigenous Air Droppable Container ADC-150 with which Indian armed force ? **—Indian Navy**
  - ☞ DRDO and the Indian Navy jointly conducted four successful in-flight release trials of the indigenous Air Droppable Container ADC-150 from the P8I aircraft off the coast of Goa, between February 21 to March 1, 2026. Designed and developed to deliver a 150 kg payload, the Air Droppable Container will enhance the naval operational logistics capabilities for providing a quick response to naval vessels under distress needing critical stores, equipment and medical assistance at blue sea deployed far from the coast.
- Jal Jeevan Mission has been recently extended up to **—December 2028**
  - ☞ On March 10, 2026, the Union Cabinet approved the extension of the Jal Jeevan Mission up to December 2028. Focussing on structural reforms, a uniform national digital framework, 'Sujalam Bharat', shall be instituted under which every village shall be assigned a unique Sujal Gaon/Service Area ID. This will digitally map the complete drinking water supply system from source to tap.
- 'Say No To Proxy Sarpanch' campaign was launched by which ministry ? **—Ministry of Panchayati Raj**
  - ☞ On March 8, 2026, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched a campaign 'Say No to Proxy Sarpanch', which ran until March 18, 2026. The campaign aimed to address the practice of proxy representations in Gram Panchayats, wherein elected women sarpanches are sidelined while their male family members – commonly referred to as 'Sarpanch Pati' or 'Pradhan Pati' – exercise authority in their name.
- Which team won its first-ever Ranji Trophy in 2025-26 season ? **—Jammu & Kashmir**
  - ☞ On February 28, 2026, Jammu & Kashmir created history by winning their first-ever Ranji Trophy title in the 2025-26 season, defeating Karnataka in the final in Hubballi. J&K lost just one match during the 2025–26 season - the opener against Mumbai. In the knockouts, they defeated domestic heavyweights Madhya Pradesh and Bengal in the quarter-final and semi-final, respectively, to reach the final.

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- The winner of the 60th Jnanpith Award for 2025 is **—R. Vairamuthu**
  - ☞ The Bharatiya Jnanpith has announced that the 60th Jnanpith Award for the year 2025 will be presented to the eminent Tamil litterateur R. Vairamuthu. He is being honoured for his outstanding contribution to Tamil literature, creativity and distinctive poetic expression. R. Vairamuthu has earlier been awarded the National Film Award (Best Lyricist) seven times in his 40-year career, the Padma Bhushan (2014), and the Padma Shri (2003), the Sahitya Akademi Award (2003) for his novel 'Kallikadu Ithihasam' and the Kalaimamani Award for his contribution to the arts by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

INTERNATIONAL

- US President Donald Trump recently announced US$ 300 billion partnerships with which Indian company to build first major US refinery in 50 years ? **—Reliance Industries Limited**
  - ☞ President Donald Trump has recently announced a historic US$ 300 billion partnership with India's Reliance Industries Ltd to open America First Refining, the first new major oil refinery in the US in 50 years. Located at the Port of Brownsville, Texas, the facility is described as the largest investment in US history and is expected to create thousands of jobs while serving as the cleanest refinery in the world.
- What was the theme of the International Women's Day 2026 ? **—Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls**
  - ☞ The International Women's Day 2026 (March 8) was held under the theme, 'Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls', which calls for action to dismantle all barriers to equal justice : discriminatory laws, weak legal protections and harmful practices and social norms that erode the rights of women and girls. A global 'Give to Gain' campaign calls attention to the importance of collaboration and generosity for achieving gender equality.
- Which film won the Best Picture award at the 98th Academy Awards ? **—One Battle After Another**
  - ☞ Political thriller 'One Battle After Another', directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, won six awards, including Best Picture award, at the 98th Academy Awards. The film also won Best Director award, Best Supporting Actor (Sean Penn), Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Editing and Best Casting.
- First South-East Asian country to ban social media for children under age 16 is **—Indonesia**
  - ☞ Indonesia is the first country in South-East Asia to restrict the access of children to social media. According to Indonesia's Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs, children under the age of 16 can no longer have accounts on high-risk digital platforms. The implementation was to start gradually from March 28, 2026 until all platforms fulfil their compliance obligations (as on March 15, 2026).
- The US military operation against Iran launched on February 28, 2026, was codenamed **—Operation Epic Fury**
  - ☞ In the early hours of 28 February, 2026, Israel and the United States launched the first stage of their military campaign on Iran targeting its key leadership, air defence capabilities, missile sites and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy. The military operation was codenamed 'Operation Epic Fury' by the United States and 'Roaring Lion' by Israel.
- The Joint Military Exercise LAMITIYE 2026 was conducted at **—Seychelles Defence Academy**
  - ☞ The 11th edition of the India-Seychelles Joint Military Exercise LAMITIYE 2026, was conducted at the Seychelles Defence Academy, from from 9-20 March, 2026. 'LAMITIYE' meaning 'Friendship' in the Creole language is a biennial training event and has been conducted in Seychelles since 2001. This edition marked the participation of all three Indian Armed Forces services, comprising of personnel from the ASSAM Regiment and participation from Indian Navy and Indian Air Force including INS Trikand and a C-130 aircraft.
- Which country has recently proposed 'Hexagon of Alliances' ? **—Israel**
  - ☞ In February 2026, Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu proposed a 'Hexagon of Alliances' that would include Israel, India, Greece and Cyprus, along with other unnamed Arab, African and Asian states. According to Israeli PM, the alliance would unite to collectively stand against what he called 'radical' adversaries. He has framed the Middle East as divided into 'radical' Sunni and Shia axes.
- 'Freedom Shield', a joint military exercise was jointly launched by **—USA and South Korea**
  - ☞ From March 9-19, 2026, the United States and South Korea conducted the joint military exercise 'Freedom Shield', to bolster combined defence capabilities of both countries against security threats, especially from North Korea. The exercise involved approximately 18,000 South Korean troops, along with US personnel focussing on all-domain operations, including live, virtual and field-based training.
- Which political party won the majority seats in the House of Representatives election held in Nepal on March 5, 2026 ? **—Rastriya Swatantra Party**
  - ☞ According to the final official results of the Nepal's March 5, 2026 general elections, Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) won 182 seats in the 275-member House of Representatives of the Nepal's Parliament. The party won 125 seats under the first-past-the-post electoral system and an additional 57 seats under proportional representation. This is the largest single-party majority since democracy was restored in Nepal in 1991.
- The 2026 Shield of the Americas Summit was held in **—Doral, Florida**
  - ☞ On March 7, 2026, the United States hosted leaders from the 12 Latin American and Caribbean countries at the inaugural 'Shield of the Americas' Summit at the National Doral Miami resort in Florida, USA. The Shield seeks to address serious security and narcotics issues. The summit also aimed to support the administration's efforts to rebuild the US sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere.
- Who was appointed as the new supreme leader of Iran after Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed ? **—Mojtaba Khamenei**
  - ☞ Mojtaba Khamenei succeeded his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as the supreme leader of Iran who was killed in Tehran during the first wave of US and Israeli strikes against Iran on February 28, 2026.

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Science & Technology

Very Low Earth Orbit

In March 2026, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Bellatrix Aerospace entered into partnership to advance indigenous capabilities in satellite platforms designed for Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO) operations.

VLEO is :

- VLEO is situated at an altitude between 100 and approximately 450 km, most commonly between 250 km–350 km.
- Satellites operating in VLEO are capable for significantly higher-resolution imaging and drastically reduced communication latency compared to traditional Low Earth Orbits.
- Reduced launch costs and less energy requirement to place a payload into these orbits are facilitated due to close proximity with Earth.
- VLEO is relatively safe from collisions with space debris, as objects naturally decay and re-enter Earth's atmosphere at an accelerated rate due to residual drag.
- The more benign radiation environment makes it possible to use terrestrial grade, general purpose electronic components.
- It enables higher versatility in launch options, such as micro-launchers and in-orbit transfer vehicles.

Disadvantages

- Residual atmosphere at such altitude is dense enough to cause orbital decay.
- Hence, sophisticated propulsion systems are required to maintain altitude.

The European Space Agency's 'Call for Ideas' programme aims to look for new, innovative ways to take advantage of the unique characteristics of VLEO and how to mitigate their challenges.

Sheshnaag-150

Sheshnaag-150 is India's long-range swarming attack drone currently undergoing testing and development. It has been designed by Bengaluru-based defence startup Newspace Research Technologies.

Key Highlights :

- The Sheshnaag-150 is designed as a coordinated swarm-attack drone system. Multiple drones can operate together to overwhelm enemy air defences while carrying out precision strikes on selected targets.
- The platform has an operational range of over 1,000 km and can remain airborne for more than five hours. This endurance allows it to loiter over target areas, conduct surveillance and strike when necessary.
- The drone can also operate with a high degree of automation. The system is designed to identify, track and engage targets autonomously, requiring only minimal human supervision.
- The drone can carry warheads weighing between 25 kg and 40 kg, which is sufficient to damage infrastructure, military vehicles or personnel.
- A major advantage of the Sheshnaag system lies in its proprietary control software. The core 'mother code' controls not only the Sheshnaag-150 but also other related drone platforms built on the same architecture.
- Sheshnaag-150 is likely to use a visual navigation system in the future, allowing the drone to operate even when satellite navigation signals are jammed or unavailable.

Van Allen Probe A

On March 11, 2026, NASA's Van Allen Probe A re-entered Earth's atmosphere, almost 14 years after its launch. From 2012 to 2019, the spacecraft and its twin, Van Allen Probe B, flew through the Van Allen belts.

About Van Allen Probe

- Originally designed for a two-year mission, the Van Allen Probes A and B were launched on August 30, 2012 and gathered unprecedented data on the Van Allen belts for almost seven years.
- The Van Allen Probes were the first spacecraft designed to operate and gather scientific data within the Van Allen belts, a region around our planet where most spacecraft and astronaut missions minimize time in order to avoid damaging radiation.
- The mission was formally known as Radiation Belt Storm Probes and part of NASA's *Living With a Star* programme.
- The mission was managed and operated by John Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab.

Re-entry of Van Allen Probe

- In 2019, NASA deactivated the mission seven years after its launch, with expected re-entry in 2034.
- However, intense solar activity, which reached its peak in 2024, increasing atmospheric drag on the spacecraft and resulting into earlier-than-expected re-entry. Currently, the Van Allen Probe B is expected to re-enter not before 2030.

Significance of Van Allen Belts

- Earth's Van Allen belts are two invisible donut-shaped rings that surround Earth, one closer and the other farther. They are ring of charged particles held by the Earth's magnetic field.

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- The belts shield Earth from cosmic radiation, solar storms and the constantly streaming solar wind that are harmful to humans and can damage technology.
- The archived data from the Van Allen Probe are to understand the radiation belts surrounding the Earth, which are key to predicting how solar activity impacts satellites, astronauts and even systems on Earth such as communications, navigation and power grids. The data also helps in improving forecasts of space weather events and their potential consequences.

NASA's DART Mission

New research reveals that when NASA's DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) spacecraft intentionally impacted the asteroid moonlet Dimorphos in September 2022, it didn't just change the motion of Dimorphos around its larger companion, Didymos; the crash also shifted the orbit of both asteroids around the Sun. Linked together by gravity, Didymos and Dimorphos orbit each other around a shared center of mass in a configuration known as a binary system, so changes to one asteroid affect the other. That change marks the first time a human-made object has measurably altered the path of a celestial body around the Sun. DART was the first-ever mission, launched in 2021, dedicated to investigating and demonstrating one method of asteroid deflection by changing an asteroid's motion in space through kinetic impact.

Oleum Gas

On March 2, 2026, the Oleum gas leak took place at Bhageria Industries Ltd in Tarapur MIDC, Boisar in Palghar district, Maharashtra. According to a statement released by the Collector of Palaghar District, the incident led to the evacuation of more than 2,600 individuals, including over 1,600 students from a local school, as a precautionary measure.

What is Oleum Gas ?

- It is also known as Fuming Sulphuric Acid or Nordhausen acid.
- It is formed by dissolving Sulphur Trioxide in Sulphuric Acid.
- It is highly corrosive, dense, colourless and oily liquid.
- It releases dense, toxic white fume when it is leaked. When exposed to air, the dissolved Sulphur Trioxide reacts immediately with atmospheric moisture to form sulfuric acid mist, which appears as a thick white cloud.
- It is used in the production of sulphuric acid.
- It can react with environmental moisture to form corrosive fog.

Applications and Health Effects

- Production of anhydrous nitration mixtures, such as TNT.
- It is used as sulfonating agent in production of dyes and petrochemical industries.
- It affects respiratory tract and can cause pulmonary edema, which can be fatal.
- It can lead to permanent scarring or blindness.

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Gravity Bomb

Gravity Bomb, also known as 'free-fall' bomb, has following characteristics :

- It is an unpowered munition.
- It lacks an internal engine.
- The trajectory after the release of the bomb is guided by gravity, aerodynamics and the speed and altitude of the aircraft from which the bomb is released.

Modern Version of Gravity Bomb

- Gravity Bombs used during the World War II were unguided, less accurate and caused large-scale destruction. The modern gravity bombs are equipped with Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) kits, which are guided by GPS and steerable fins, enabling the bomb to glide precisely to specific coordinates.
- They are cheap and allow for high-volume bombardment, but pilot must fly directly over or very near the target to drop them, gravity bombs are deployed only when military achieves 'air superiority.'

Gravity Bombs of United States

- **Conventional Gravity Bombs :** Mark 80 series, which includes : Mk 82 (500 lb), Mk 83 (1,000 lb) and Mk 84 (2,000 lb). These Mark 80 series bombs when equipped with JDAM kits are also known as GBU-31, GBU-32 and GBU-38, which are guided by GPS :
  1. 500-pound (Mk 82) : For 'soft' targets such as light vehicles, radar installations, or exposed infantry positions.
  2. 1,000-pound (Mk 83) : A medium-yield weapon utilised for destroying reinforced concrete structures, command posts, or smaller bridges.
  3. 2,000-pound (Mk 84) : The bunker-buster, capable of obliterating deeply buried military complexes or large industrial facilities, creating blast craters up to 50 feet wide and 36 feet deep.
- **Nuclear Gravity Bombs :** B61 and B83 series are nuclear gravity bombs in US arsenal. Their yield is measured in kilotons or megatons of TNT. They cost upwards of $20 million per unit to modernize, along with expensive Life Extension programmes. The use of these bombs needs explicit authorisation from the US President.

Quasi-2D Tellurium (Te) Nanosheets

A team of scientists from the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST), Mohali, have found a way to develop a new nano-material called quasi-2D α-Tellurium (Te) nanosheets in an emergent ferromagnetic state that can make future hydrogen-producing electrolysers more energy-efficient.

Key Highlights :

- The procedure combines scalable liquid-phase exfoliation, strain-engineered lattice distortions and advanced spin-sensitive probes to explicitly track

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how unpaired surface spins emerge and furthermore how it can be manipulated.

- The study shows that when bulk tellurium is exfoliated into quasi-2D α-Te nanosheets, the unpaired 5p electron spins, quenched in bulk Te, is unlocked.
- It gives rise to an emergent ferromagnetic state tied to surface strain and broken inversion symmetry.
- This surface magnetism couples strongly with ferroelectricity to produce a giant magnetoelectric response, which can be harnessed to to significantly boost the Hydrogen Evolution Reaction (HER).

Significance of the Study

- The study shows that an elemental 2D material can host unpaired surface spins that become ferromagnetically ordered and are directly controllable through strain and electric fields, rather than relying on transition-metal ions or complex magnetic compounds.
- The work connects three areas—spintronics, multiferroic nanoelectronics and green hydrogen technologies, targeting applications in low-power memory, smart sensors and magnetoelectric-driven water electrolysers.
- The stability and flexibility of quasi-2D α-Te nanosheets make them promising for flexible, portable and wearable energy and sensing technologies, potentially improving access to clean energy and real-time health or environmental monitoring for the wider population.

Heat Transport in Magnetic Semiconductors Unveils New Possibilities in High-Performance Electronics

A new study by the research team at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru, has demonstrated that strong coupling between phonons and magnetic spin fluctuations plays an important role in governing heat transport in magnetic semiconductors.

Key Highlights :

- The research team employed state-of-the-art temperature-dependent inelastic X-ray scattering techniques to directly measure phonon lifetimes in high-quality epitaxial Chromium nitride (CrN) thin films across the magnetic phase transition.
- The study revealed that acoustic photons, which are the primary carriers of heat, experience strong damping near the Néel temperature due to intense interactions with magnetic spin fluctuations.
- As the temperature increases further and long-range magnetic order weakens, phonon lifetimes increase anomalously. This leads to enhanced thermal conductivity at raised temperatures, contrary to conventional expectations.
- In contrast, optical phonons were found to follow standard temperature-dependent behaviour, clearly isolating the role of spin fluctuations in controlling heat transport.
- The experiment establishes a clear microscopic mechanism linking magnetic fluctuations to anomalous heat conduction.

Significance of the Study

- The study provides the first direct experimental evidence connecting spin fluctuations with enhanced thermal conductivity in magnetic semiconductors.
- By understanding how spin–lattice interactions influence heat flow, researchers can explore new strategies for thermal management in magnetic, spintronic and quantum devices, where heat dissipation is a critical challenge.

Technological Implications

- Efficient heat management is essential for the reliable operation of high-power spintronic devices, magnetic memory elements and future quantum technologies.
- The ability to tune thermal transport through magnetic degrees of freedom offers a fundamentally new approach to designing materials with controllable heat flow, potentially enabling devices that are both faster and more energy efficient.

New Cathode Material Enhances Performance of Zinc-ion Batteries

Researchers from the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS), Bengaluru, have synthesised sulfur vacancy-induced 1T-phase Molybdenum Disulfide (1T-MoS_2), a material that promises to make zinc batteries more viable for large-scale grid storage.

Aqueous zinc-ion batteries, which use water-based electrolytes, are hailed as safe, cost-effective and environmentally strong alternative for storing energy from renewable sources. Zinc metal offers high theoretical capacity, abundant reserves and used directly as the anode. However, the development of high-capacity, long-lasting cathode materials has been a key challenge.

Key Highlights :

- The research team used carefully controlled hydrothermal method to produce sulphur deficient 1T-phase MoS_2 nanoflakes. This metallic-phase material possesses a high surface area and enhanced conductivity, which facilitates faster electrochemical reactions and greater charge storage.
- The research team identified 0·2 to 1·3 Volts as the ideal operational window for the stable operation of battery.

Key Outcomes :

- The fabricated zinc-ion battery demonstrated remarkable cyclic stability, retaining 97·91% of its initial capacity after 500 continuous charge-discharge cycles.
- The device exhibited a Coulombic efficiency of 99·7%, indicating highly reversible zinc-ion insertion and extraction with minimal side reactions.
- The breakthrough helps to make affordable, safe and efficient batteries that could store massive amount of renewable energy on the grid.

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Failure of Atomic Clock in NAVIC

On March 13, 2026, ISRO informed the failure of the last atomic clock aboard the ISRO's IRNSS- 1F satellite, which means that positioning data from IRNSS-1F was also lost. IRNSS-1F, launched in March 2016, completed its design mission life of 10 years, but will continue to function in-orbit for various societal applications to provide one way broadcast messaging services.

Principle of Atomic Clocks

- An atomic clock (or atomic frequency standard) works like a conventional clock but the time-base of the clock, instead of being an oscillating mass as in a pendulum clock, is based on the properties of atoms when transitioning between different energy states. It uses an internal resonance frequency of atoms or molecules to measure the passage of time.
- An atomic frequency standard can be either active or passive :
  1. Active Standard uses as a reference the electromagnetic radiation emitted by atoms as they decay from a higher energy state to a lower energy state. Example : Self-oscillating Maser.
  2. Passive Standard uses attempts to match the frequency of an electronic oscillator or laser to the resonant frequency of the atoms by means of a feedback circuit. Example : cesium atomic beam and the rubidium gas cell.
- The cesium clock has high accuracy and good long-term stability. The hydrogen maser has the best stability for periods of up to a few hours. The rubidium cell is the least expensive and most compact and also has good short-term stability.
- Atomic clocks are key for satellites being able to provide positioning data that is used for applications such as navigation of vehicles, mapping and surveying and even planning large constructions with accuracy. They are also used in advanced communication systems.

The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)—also referred to with the operational name of Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) was planned to be a seven-satellite system to provide positioning data over the Indian subcontinent and 1500 km around it. NavIC offers two services : Standard Position Service (SPS) for civilian users and Restricted Service (RS) for strategic users. Atleast four satellites must be functional to provide navigation services.

P.Darpan

Important Scientific Terminologies in News

Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT)	• It is a molecular diagnostic technique to detect the genetic material (also known as nucleic acids) in each specimen sample. • Amplifying these nucleic acids enables NAATs to detect very small amounts of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in a specimen, making these tests highly sensitive for diagnosing COVID-19.
Cushing Syndrome	• Also known as hypercortisolism, it is a rare hormonal condition that happens when the body has too much cortisol. It results in weight gain (specifically 'moon face' and 'buffalo hump'), thin skin, bruising and purple stretch marks. It is caused by overproduction of cortisol (endogenous) or long-term medication use (exogenous).
Human Metapneumovirus	• It causes respiratory illness, with symptoms including cough, fever, nasal congestion and shortness of breath. • It spreads from person to person or surface to person. • Severe illness includes Asthma attack, Bronchiolitis, croup or barking cough.
Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder	• Individuals display avoidance or restriction of food intake, often due to sensory issues, fear-related avoidance of eating, or low appetite, leading to nutritional deficiencies, weight loss and psychosocial impairments. • ARFID can occur at any age but typically arises in childhood and can persist into adulthood. Furthermore, this condition may also occur with other medical or psychiatric disorders, complicating both diagnosis and treatment.
Meningococcal bacterial infection	• It is a severe, rapidly progressing bacterial infection caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*, which can lead to meningitis (brain/spinal cord lining inflammation) or septicemia (bloodstream infection). • It is characterized by high fever, severe headache, neck stiffness and a rash. Neck Stiffness is common symptom. • It spreads from person-to-person through spit or mucus. • Antibiotics are used for its treatment.
Asteroid 2024 YR4	As per the data collected from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope, scientists have refined near-Earth asteroid 2024 YR4's orbit and are ruling out a chance of lunar impact on December 22, 2032. With the new data, 2024 YR4 is expected to pass by the lunar surface at a distance of 13,200 miles (21,200 km). Asteroid 2024 YR4 was discovered in late 2024 by the NASA-funded Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System station in Chile.
Amchepry	Japan has recently approved the world's first stem-cell-based therapy for Parkinson's disease, developed by Sumitomo Pharma in collaboration with Dr. Jun Takahashi at Kyoto University. Adult Cells are reprogrammed to become induced Pluripotent Stem (iPS) cells which is guided to become dopamine-producing cells in human brain.

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Economic Scenario

- *First Advance Estimates of Horticulture Crops for Crop Year 2025-26*
- *Agriculture & Allied Sector GVA More Than Doubles to ₹ 48·77 Lakh Crore in 2023-24*
- *Second Advance Estimates of Production of Major Agricultural Crops (Kharif and Rabi) for 2025-26*
- *Government Announces Standards of Green Ammonia, Green Methanol*
- *Indian Railways Announces Five New Reforms Under 'Reform Express'; Cargo, Construction and Passenger Convenience in Focus*
- *Power Generation Capacity from Various Sources*
- *Department of Posts Launches '24 Speed Post' Service*
- *India Signs $ 2·6 Billion Uranium Supply Agreement with Canada*
- *₹ 20,000 Crore Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions 2·0 (CGSMFI 2·0)*
- *Government Forms 7 Groups of Secretaries to Deal with Gulf Crisis*
- *US Launches Section 301 Probe into India, 15 Others Over 'Excess Capacity'*
- *US Launches Fresh Investigation into India, 59 Other Countries on Forced Labour Charges*
- *Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme*
- *14th Ministerial Conference of WTO Held in Yaounde, Cameroon*
- *e-GramSwaraj Platform*

First Advance Estimates of Horticulture Crops for Crop Year 2025-26

The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has released the first advance estimates for horticulture crops for 2025-26 along with the final estimates for previous years.

According to the data, the total area under horticulture crops increased from 29·09 million hectares in 2023-24 (final) to 30·14 million hectares in 2024-25, marking a rise of 1·05 million hectares or 3·61 per cent. During the same period, total horticulture production rose from 354·74 million tonnes to 370·74 million tonnes.

For 2025-26, the first advance estimate projects horticulture area at around 30·13 million hectares, with production expected to reach about 370·85 million tonnes, slightly higher than the 2024-25 final estimate.

Fruit and Vegetable Production

Fruit production in 2024-25 is estimated to rise by 4·13 per cent to 117·65 million tonnes, compared with 112·98 million tonnes in 2023-24. The increase is largely driven by higher output of banana, mango, mandarin, papaya, guava, watermelon and jackfruit.

Vegetable production is projected to grow by 5·11 per cent, from 207·21 million tonnes in 2023-24 to 217·80 million tonnes in 2024-25. Higher output has been recorded for crops such as onion, potato, green chilli, cauliflower, cabbage, brinjal, okra, peas, pumpkin, bottle gourd, bitter gourd, cucumber, tapioca, sweet potato, radish and capsicum.

For 2025-26, fruit production is expected to increase slightly to 118·68 million tonnes, while vegetable production is estimated at around 216·16 million tonnes. Crops such as tomato, peas, tapioca, green chilli and pumpkin are showing an increasing production trend.

Onion, Potato and Tomato Output

Onion acreage expanded significantly from 1·54 million hectares in 2023-24 to 1·97 million hectares in 2024-25, an increase of 0·43 million hectares or 27·74 per cent. Onion production in 2024-25 is estimated at 30·77 million tonnes, up 26·79 per cent from 24·27 million tonnes in the previous year.

Potato production is projected to rise from 57·05 million tonnes in 2023-24 to 58·57 million tonnes in 2024-25, while output in 2025-26 is expected to be around 58·45 million tonnes.

Tomato production, estimated at 20·60 million tonnes in 2024-25 compared with 21·32 million tonnes in 2023-24, is projected to rebound sharply to about 22·70 million tonnes in 2025-26.

Floriculture and Medicinal Plants

The area under aromatic and medicinal plants is estimated to increase from 0·93 million hectares in 2023-24 to 0·98 million hectares in 2024-25, a rise of 6·13 per cent. Production is estimated at 0·90 million tonnes in 2024-25 and 0·903 million tonnes in 2025-26.

The area under flowers expanded significantly from 0·32 million hectares to 0·40 million hectares in 2024-25, registering a 25·24 per cent increase. Flower production rose by 20·65 per cent to 4·27 million tonnes in 2024-25 and is expected to be around 4·17 million tonnes in 2025-26.

Spice and Plantation Crops

The area under spices increased from 5·02 million hectares in 2023-24 to 5·09 million hectares in 2024-25, while production rose from 12·48 million tonnes to 12·99 million tonnes. Spice production is expected to be around 12·82 million tonnes in

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2025-26. Higher area and output have been recorded for cumin, ginger, garlic and turmeric, with further growth expected in garlic, turmeric and cardamom.

Production of plantation crops stood at 17·66 million tonnes in 2023-24 and is estimated at 16·98 million tonnes in 2024-25. For 2025-26, plantation crop area is projected at about 4·66 million hectares, with production expected to reach around 17·97 million tonnes.

Among the major fruits, banana production increased to 39·62 million tonnes in 2025-26 from 38·32 million tonnes, that of mango to 23·45 million tonnes from 23·14 million tonnes, apple to 2·79 million tonnes from 2·66 million tonnes, guava 5·52 million tonnes from 5·48 million tonnes and papaya 5·81 million tonnes from 5·76 million tonnes. The fruits which reported a fall in production include orange (also Kinnow) to 6·46 million tonnes from 6·73 million tonnes, grape to 3·4 million tonnes from 3·65 million tonnes, pineapple to 1·7 million tonnes from 1·71 million tonnes, pomegranate to 2·8 million tonnes from 2·82 million tonnes and water melon to 4·62 million tonnes from 4·85 million tonnes.

Though, overall vegetables production is estimated to marginally drop, output of tomato, mushroom, tapioca, bhindi (okra), peas, pumpkin, sweet potato, green chillies and radish are likely to be on higher side.

Among the essential commodities, production of tomato is likely to be up by 10 per cent but onion may drop 11 per cent while potato is seen to be almost at par with last year.

Among the spices group, the production of cardamom, ajwain, turmeric, fennel, garlic, coriander, clove and celery, dill & poppy is seen to be higher from 2024-25. But, the output of cumin, ginger, curry leaf, red chillies (dried), black pepper, tamarind, saffron and vanilla is likely to drop.

In the plantation group, coconut production is pegged at 14·92 million tonnes against 13·97 million tonnes in 2024-25 while that of areacanut at 1·53 million tonnes from 1·49 million tonnes and betel leaves at 684,000 tonnes against 685,000 tonnes. But the output of cashewnut and cocoa is likely to be stagnant at 802,000 tonnes and 33,000 tonne, respectively.

Horticulture Estimates at a Glance (Output in Million Tonnes)

Horticulture Crop	2024-25 (Final Estimates)	2025-26 (FAE)	% Change
Fruits	117·65	118·68	0·9
Vegetables	217·80	216·16	– 0·8
Aromatics & Medicinal Plants	0·90	0·90	0·0
Floriculture	4·27	4·17	– 2·3
Honey	0·15	0·15	0·0
Plantation Crops	16·98	17·97	5·8
Spices	12·99	12·82	– 1·3
Total Horticulture Crops	370·74	370·85	0·9
Total Area under Horticulture Crops (Million Hectare)	30·14	30·13	– 0·033
Tomato	20·60	22·70	10·2
Onion	30·77	27·31	– 11·2
Potato	58·57	58·45	– 0·2
Banana	38·32	39·62	3·39
Mango	23·14	23·45	1·34
Apple	2·66	2·79	4·89
Guava	5·48	5·52	0·73
Papaya	5·76	5·81	0·87
Orange (Kinnow)	6·73	6·46	– 4·01
Grapes	3·65	3·4	– 6·85
Pineapple	1·71	1·7	– 0·58
Pomegranate	2·82	2·8	– 0·71
Watermelon	4·85	4·62	– 4·74
Coconut	13·97	14·92	6·80
Areacanut	1·49	1·53	2·68

Agriculture & Allied Sector GVA More Than Doubles to ₹ 48·77 Lakh Crore in 2023-24

As per the latest estimates of GVA released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoS&PI), the composition of Agriculture & Allied Sector in total GVA is about 18% in FY 2025-26.

Key Achievements Between 2014-15 and 2023-24

Indicators	2014-15	2023-24
Gross Value Added of Agriculture & Allied sector (₹ Crore)	20,93,612	52,08,800 (2025-26)
GVA of Live Stock (₹ Crore)	5,10,411	15,05,615
GVA of Crops (₹ Crore)	12,92,874	26,52,891
GVA of Fishing (₹ Crore)	11,65,67	36,81,24
Production of Foodgrains (Million Tonnes)	251·54	348·65 (2025-26 : Only for Kharif and Rabi season)

Further, as per the National Accounts Statistics, the GVA of agriculture and allied sector for 2014-15 is estimated at ₹ 20,93,612 crore and for 2023-24 it is estimated at ₹ 48,77,867 crore. Agriculture and Allied sector has recorded compound annual growth of 8·83 per cent for the period 2014-15 to 2023-24 at current prices.

As per the National Accounts Statistics, the share of Livestock, Crops and Fishing & Aquaculture in agriculture & allied sector stands at 30·87 per cent, 54·39 per cent and 7·55 per cent, respectively. The GVA of the Livestock for 2014-15 was estimated at ₹ 5,10,411 crore which has increased to ₹ 15,05,615 crore in 2023-24. The GVA of crops for 2014-15 was estimated at ₹ 12,92,874 crore

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which has increased to ₹ 26,52,891 crore in 2023-24 similarly, the GVA of the Fishing & Aquaculture has increased from ₹ 11,65,67 crore in 2014-15 to ₹ 36,81,24 crore in 2023-24.

The production of foodgrain has been increasing during the last 10 years in the country. For 2015-16 the total foodgrain production in the country was estimated at 2515·42 LMT which has increased to 3577·32 LMT during 2024-25, registering a compound annual growth of approx. 3·6%. Further, as per Second Advance Estimates for 2025-26, the total foodgrain production is estimated at 348·65 million tonnes.

As per the Second Advance Estimates of Annual GDP for 2025-26, the GVA of Agriculture & Allied Sector is estimated at 52,08,800 crore registering a growth of 2·4%.

Second Advance Estimates of Production of Major Agricultural Crops (Kharif and Rabi) for 2025-26

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has released Second Advance Estimates of production of Major Agricultural Crops (Kharif & Rabi) for the year 2025-26.

As per the Second Advance Estimates for 2025–26, Kharif foodgrain production is estimated at 1741·44 LMT and Rabi foodgrain production at 1745·13 LMT. This is approximately 46 LMT (2·8%) and 53 LMT (3·2%) higher, respectively, compared to last year's Kharif foodgrain production of 1694·60 LMT and Rabi foodgrain production of 1691·66 LMT.

Kharif Rice production is estimated at 1239·28 LMT as compared to 1227·72 LMT in 2024-25, showing an increase of 11·56 LMT. Production of Rabi Rice is estimated at 167·20 LMT. Production of Wheat is estimated at 1202·10 LMT, which is higher by 22·65 LMT as compared to previous year production of 1179·45 LMT.

Production of Shree Anna (Kharif) is estimated at 123·43 LMT and Shree Anna(Rabi) is estimated at 30·98 LMT. Kharif maize production is estimated at a record 302·47 LMT and Rabi maize production at a record 159·03 LMT, resulting in strong growth in Nutri/coarse cereals as well. Nutri/coarse cereals (Kharif) production is estimated at 425·89 LMT and Nutri/coarse cereals (Rabi) production at 213·41 LMT.

Production of Tur and Gram is estimated at 34·55 LMT and 117·92 LMT, respectively and the production of Lentil is estimated at 17·33 LMT.

The production of Kharif and Rabi Groundnut is estimated at 112·94 LMT and 7·97 LMT, respectively. Kharif Groundnut production is higher by 8·82 LMT as compared to previous year Kharif groundnut production of 104·12 LMT. The production of Soybean is estimated at 127·20 LMT and Rapeseed & Mustard is estimated at 133·31 LMT. The production of Cotton is estimated at 290·91 lakh Bales (of 170 kg each) and production of Sugarcane is estimated at 5001·97 LMT.

The details of production of various crops (Kharif & Rabi) are given as under :

Kharif Foodgrains–1741·44 LMT/ Rabi Foodgrains (Excluding Summer)–1745·13 LMT

- Kharif Rice – 1239·28 LMT (Record); Rabi Rice(Excluding Summer) – 167·20 LMT
- Wheat – 1202·10 LMT (Record)
- Kharif Maize – 302·47 LMT (Record); Rabi Maize(Excluding Summer)– 159·03 LMT (Record)
- Kharif Shree Anna– 123·43 LMT; Rabi Shree Anna – 30·98 LMT
- Tur – 34·55 LMT
- Gram – 117·92 LMT
- Lentil – 17·33 LMT

Kharif Oilseeds–265·33 LMT / Rabi Oilseeds (Excluding Summer)–144·65 LMT

- Kharif Groundnut – 112·94 LMT (Record); Rabi Groundnut (Excluding Summer) – 7·97 LMT
- Soybean – 127·20 LMT
- Rapeseed & Mustard – 133·31 LMT (Record)
- Sugarcane – 5001·97 LMT (Record)
- Cotton – 290·91 lakh Bales (170 kgs. each)
- Jute – 81·27 lakh Bales (180 kgs. each)

Government Announces Standards of Green Ammonia, Green Methanol

The Government of India notified the Green Ammonia and Green Methanol Standards for India on February 27, 2026 for the advancement of the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM).

The NGHM was approved by the Union Cabinet on January 4, 2023, with an initial outlay of ₹ 19,744 crore to make India a global hub for production, utilisation and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives.

The standards, issued by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, outlines the emission thresholds and eligibility conditions that must be compiled in order for ammonia and methanol produced to be classified as 'green', *i.e.*, produced using green hydrogen derived from renewable sources.

- Green Ammonia Standard for India shall have a total non-biogenic greenhouse gas emission, arising from green hydrogen production, ammonia synthesis, purification, compression and on-site storage, of not more than 0·38 kg CO_2 equivalent per kg of ammonia (kg CO_2 eq/kg NH_3), calculated as an average over the preceding 12-month period.
- Green Methanol Standard for India shall have a total non-biogenic greenhouse gas emission, arising from green hydrogen production, methanol synthesis, purification and on-site storage, of not more than 0·44 kg CO_2 equivalent per kg of methanol (kg CO_2 eq/kg CH_3OH), calculated as an average over the preceding 12-month period.
- Carbon dioxide for green methanol production may be sourced from biogenic sources, direct air capture or existing industrial sources.

With this notification, India further consolidates its regulatory framework for green hydrogen and

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its derivatives under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, the statement added.

Indian Railways Announces Five New Reforms Under 'Reform Express'; Cargo, Construction and Passenger Convenience in Focus

Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, on March 24, 2026 announced that in line with Indian Railways' resolve to undertake reforms during 2026, five new reforms have been approved. With the approval of these new reforms, the total number of reforms for the year 2026 has reached nine (as on March 24, 2026).

1. Reform in Salt Transportation : The modal share of railways in salt transportation varies by use approximately 25 per cent for industrial salt and around 65 per cent for salt meant for human consumption. 62 per cent of all rail-based salt traffic covers distances of 1,000 to 2,500 kms, making it a segment well-suited for rail movement.

To address these issues :

- A stainless steel, top-loading and side-discharge container system has now been successfully developed;
- The container is made of stainless steel to prevent corrosion, and is equipped with top-loading flaps and a hydraulic side-discharge mechanism, allowing easy unloading into trucks at the destination;
- Salt containers can be placed at salt production sites for direct loading;
- These containers can then be lifted and loaded onto container trains; and
- At the destination, containers can be unloaded and placed at warehouses or godowns, with unloading done as per requirement.

2. Reform in Automobile Transportation : The major automobile production hubs served by railways include Mahesana in Gujarat; Chinchwad and Bidadi in Maharashtra and Karnataka respectively; Penukonda in Andhra Pradesh; Melpakkam and Walajabad in Tamil Nadu; and Farakhanagar in Gurugram, Haryana. Earlier initiatives included converting existing passenger coaches into automobile carrier wagons and introducing new solutions. However, further consultations revealed that the primary issue lay in the design of automobile carrier wagons.

- Railways has introduced a reform allowing special wagon designs while giving flexibility to the industry.
- Manufacturers can now design wagons based on specific origin-destination routes with high-capacity.

3. Improving Quality of Construction : The next reform focusses on improving construction quality in railway projects, introducing seven major changes.

- The threshold for assessing contractor capability through a single project has been increased from 35 per cent to 50 per cent of the project value.
- This ensures that only firms with proven capacity to execute large projects can bid for similar works. Additionally, at least 20 per cent of prior experience must be in railway-related work, recognising that different sectors such as highways, ports and airports have distinct complexities. Within railway works, complexity levels have been defined, signalling being the most complex, followed by overhead electrical and track works and relevant experience will be required accordingly.
- The second change fixes bid security at 2 per cent of the project value. This is aimed at discouraging frivolous bids and ensuring only serious participants enter the tendering process.
- The third change introduces mandatory assessment of bid capacity for all projects above ₹ 10 crore.
- The fourth enforces strict punitive provisions banning corrupt, fraudulent and anti-competitive practices.
- The fifth change mandates a detailed work plan before the start of any project, enabling improved monitoring and ensuring timely execution.
- The sixth change reduces the permissible subcontracting limit from 70 per cent to 40 per cent. Contractors will now have to directly execute at least 60 per cent of the work under their own supervision, which will ensure accountability and reduce the practice of passing on contracts after securing bids.
- The seventh change addresses predatory bidding. If a bid is more than 5 per cent below the estimated project cost, the bidder will be required to provide an additional 5 per cent performance guarantee. This is aimed at discouraging unrealistic bids that later lead to disputes, arbitration and project delays.

4. Ticket cancellation and refund : Reform number eight focusses on passenger convenience, with measures to curb misuse of ticketing systems and improve access for genuine travellers.

- Indian Railways introduced technology to detect bots and fraudulent software. Further technological interventions curtailed the ability of agents and touts to book tickets immediately after the Tatkal window opens, alongside the introduction of Aadhaar-based OTP verification. A detailed data analysis led to the identification and removal of nearly 3 crore fake accounts from the IRCTC system, resulting in a significant improvement in ticket availability.
- To address this, the earlier cancellation time windows of 48, 12, and 4 hours before departure have been revised to 72, 24 and 8 hours, aligned with the advance preparation of reservation charts which now happens 9-18 hours before departure instead of 4 hours. This will be done at no extra cost from passengers.
- Counter tickets can now be cancelled from any railway station across the country, removing the

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earlier restriction of cancellation only at the originating station.

- Requirement of filing a Ticket Deposit Receipt (TDR) for e-tickets has been removed and refunds will now be processed automatically upon cancellation.
- Passengers can now upgrade their travel class up to 30 minutes before departure, whereas earlier changes were restricted to before chart preparation.

5. Change of Train Boarding Point : Reform number nine enables passengers to change their boarding station digitally up to 30 minutes before departure of the train from its origin station. Under the new provision, if a passenger is unable to board from the original station, they can select the next convenient station and board the train without losing their confirmed seat.

Update on Previous Reforms : Previous reforms have included :

1. Reforms for Better On-Board Services,
2. Expansion of Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals with better facilities to meet freight targets,
3. The RailTech Policy and Portal, and
4. Digitisation of the Railway Claims Tribunal (e-RCT) for faster, paperless claims disposal.

Power Generation Capacity from Various Sources

As of January 31, 2026, India's total installed generation capacity has reached 5,20,511 MW. Of this, fossil fuel sources account for 2,48,542 MW (47·7 per cent) and non-fossil fuel sources account for 2,71,969 MW (52·3 per cent) Renewable energy sources account for 2,63,189 MW (50·6 per cent) of the total installed capacity (Table 1).

Availability of Power Supply in India

The all India power supply position (in terms of energy) for the last three financial years and the current financial year (up to January 2026) is given in the table (Table 2).

Table 1 : Details of All India Power Generation Capacity as on 31.01.2026

Category		Installed Generation Capacity (MW)	% Share in Total
Fossil fuels	Coal	2,21,210	42·50%
	Lignite	6,620	1·30%
	Gas	20,122	3·90%
	Diesel	589	0·10%
	Total fossil fuels :	2,48,542	47·70%
Non-fossil fuels	RES (including hydro)	2,63,189	50·60%
	Hydropower (hydroelectricity)	51,165	9·80%
	Wind, Solar & Other RE	2,12,025	40·70%
	Wind	54,650	10·50%
	Solar energy	1,40,602	27.00%
	Biomass (BM) Power/Cogeneration	10,757	2·10%
	Waste to Energy	857	0·20%
	Small hydropower	5,159	1·00%
	Nuclear energy	8,780	1·70%
	Total non-fossil fuels	2,71,969	52·30%
	Total installed capacity (Fossil fuels and non-fossil fuels)	5,20,511	100%

Table 2 : Mismatch in Energy Requirement and Energy Supply in India

Financial Year	Energy [In million units (MU)]			
	Energy Requirement	Energy Supply	Energy not Supplied	
	(MU)	(MU)	(MU)	(%)
2022-23	15,13,497	15,05,914	7,583	0·5
2023-24	16,26,132	16,22,020	4,112	0·3
2024-25	16,93,959	16,92,369	1,590	0·1
2025-26 (till January 2026)	14,27,436	14,27,009	427	0·03

Department of Posts Launches '24 Speed Post' Service

The Department of Posts launched the 24 Speed Post service on March 17, 2026. The 24 Speed Post service offers guaranteed next-day delivery for urgent and timely shipments. In the initial phase, the service will be available in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Additionally, the '24 Speed Post' and '48 Speed Post' services will offer assured D+1 and D+2 delivery timelines through dedicated processing windows and priority air transportation. These services will also include features such as OTP- based secure delivery, end-to-end tracking with SMS alerts, BNPL facility for business customers, free pickup for bulk bookings, API integration, and centralized billing. A money-back guarantee will also be offered in case of delays, further strengthening India Post's premium express delivery capabilities.

India Signs $ 2·6 Billion Uranium Supply Agreement with Canada

India and Canada on March ,2026 signed a $ 2·6 billion uranium supply agreement. The deal, signed after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney in New Delhi, is aimed at securing long-term fuel supplies for India's civilian nuclear programme. Key features of the agreement are following :

- Canada will supply uranium to fuel India's nuclear reactors. The focus is on ensuring a stable and predictable supply of fuel for

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India's Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), which run primarily on natural uranium.

- To cooperate on small modular reactors (SMRs) and advanced nuclear technologies.

India has an estimated 76,000 tonnes of uranium that could fuel about 10,000 MW of nuclear power for 30 years, news agency *Reuters* reported. However, these resources can meet only about 25 per cent of the projected future demand.

In FY21, the country imported 2,000·299 metric tonnes of uranium (MTU) from Canada and Kazakh-stan. There were no imports in FY22 and FY23. In FY24 and FY25, India imported 350 MTU and 250 MTU, respectively.

In the Union Budget 2025-26, the government announced a Nuclear Energy Mission with an ambitious goal : 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047.

₹ 20,000 Crore Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions-2·0 (CGSMFI-2·0)

The Government of India has introduced Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institu-tions-2·0 (CGSMFI-2·0). The scheme aims to provide guarantee cover to Banks/ FIs through National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) against expected losses on the financial assistance extended by them to Non-Banking Financial Company-Microfinance Institutions (NBFC-MFIs) and MFIs for on lending to small borrowers.

Salient Features of the Scheme

- **Eligible borrowers :** Existing or new small borrowers within the regulatory definition of micro finance as prescribed by RBI from time to time.
- **Guarantee coverage :** 80% of amount in default for small, 75% for medium and 70% for large NBFC-MFIs/ MFIs.
- **Guarantee fee :** 0·50% p.a., on sanctioned amount (1st year) and outstanding amount (thereafter).
- **Interest rate :** Capped at EBLR or MCLR + 2% p.a., on loans by MLIs to NBFC-MFIs or MFIs. While on-lending to small borrowers, these lenders shall cap the interest rate at 1 per cent below the average rate of lending in past 6 months.
- Valid till 30.06.2026 or loans till ₹ 20,000 crore are guaranteed, whichever is earlier.

The scheme will facilitate increased credit flow to the MFI sector. It is estimated that the scheme will facilitate on-lending by NBFC-MFIs/MFIs to approximately 36 lakh small borrowers.

Government Forms 7 Groups of Secretaries to Deal with Gulf Crisis

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced seven empowered groups to address the long-term impacts of the West Asia war, urging states to collaborate in a 'Team India' approach. He emphasized dialogue and diplomacy for peace, stressing self-reliance and preparedness for potential supply chain disruptions and energy crises.

In a whole-of-government push, the Cabinet Secretariat has set up seven groups of secretaries (GoS), to ensure close coordination across security, economy, energy, fertiliser, logistics, essential commodities and public outreach. Each group includes about two officials from the PMO and one from the Cabinet Secretariat. The move follows directions from the PM at a recent Cabinet Committee on Security meeting.

The Strategic Issues Group : SIG focussed on defence, external affairs and internal security. SIG is headed by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri. It includes Home Secretary Govind Mohan and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh among its six members and is tasked with geopolitical preparedness and public order.

The Economic, Finance and Supply Chain Group : This group is headed by DEA secretary Anuradha Thakur.This is the largest group , with 11 members, including eight secretaries. Its focus is on macro-economic stability and export-import resilience.

Petroleum, LNG and LPG Group : Energy coordination falls under the, petroleum, LNG and LPG group. This group is headed by Neeraj Mittal. The 10-member panel includes CMDs of IOC, GAIL and ONGC, and will work to ensure uninterrupted fuel supplies.

The Fertiliser Group : This group is headed by Rajat Kumar Mishra. The group has 11 members, including heads of key cooperatives

Outcome of Sixteenth Finance Commissions' Recommendations in Figures

Table 1 : Devolution of States' Share (₹ Crore)

FY	States' Share	Divisible Pool*	States' Share in %
2021-22	883100	2217737	39·8
2022-23	948982	2548723	37·2
2023-24	1129494	2955296	38·2
2024-25	1286885	3257513	39·5
2025-26 (RE)	1392971	3574600	39·0
2026-27 (BE)	1526255	3944110	38·7

States' share hovered around 39 per cent of the divisible pool.

*The divisible pool is derived by netting out the Cess and surcharges from gross tax revenue of the Centre.

Table 2 : Revenue from the Cess and Surcharges (₹ Crore)

FY	Revenue from Cess and Surcharges
2021-22	484055
2022-23	496757
2023-24	500981
2024-25	529342
2025-26(RE)	493550
2026-27(BE)	449720

Table 3 : Percentage Share of Big States in Horizontal Devolution

States	XIV FC	XV FC	XVI FC
Uttar Pradesh	18·0	17·9	17·6
Bihar	9·7	10·1	10·0
Madhya Pradesh	7·6	7·9	7·4
West Bengal	7·3	7·5	7·2
Maharashtra	5·5	6·3	6·4
Rajasthan	5·5	6·0	6·4
Odisha	4·6	4·5	4·4

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such as Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative and KRIBHCO. It is focussed on ensuring the timely availability of agricultural inputs.

The Price and Essential Commodities Group : This group is chaired by consumer affairs secretary Nidhi Khare. The group comprises seven officials .The group is tasked with managing inflation and maintaining supply stability.

Transport and Logistics Group : This group is headed by shipping secretary Vijay Kumar, with a six-member. The main task of this group is to ensure smooth movement of goods across the country.

The Information, Communication and Public Engagement Group : This group is led by I&B secretary Sanjay Jaju. The group has 10 members and will handle coordinated messaging and outreach.

US Launches Section 301 Probe into India, 15 Others Over 'Excess Capacity'

In an escalation of trade tensions that could raise fresh concerns for Indian exporters, the US has launched investigations into India and 15 other economies over alleged 'structural excess capacity' in manufacturing that it says is distorting global markets and threatening American industries.

The investigation, initiated under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 on March 11, 2026, targets sectors in India such as textiles, health products, construction goods, auto-motive goods, solar modules, petro-chemicals and steel.

Other economies identified by the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) include China, the EU, Singapore, Switzerland, Norway, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Mexico and Japan.

The USTR said evidence suggested structural excess capacity in several Indian sectors. It noted that India recorded a $58-billion bilateral trade surplus with the US in 2025 and that sectors such as textiles, health products, construction goods and automotive goods contributed to India's global goods trade surplus. The notice also flagged excess capacity in solar modules, petrochemicals and steel.

The US may fast-track the investigations and impose Section 301 tariffs by July 2026, as the 10 per cent global tariffs under Section 122, introduced after the US Supreme Court struck down country-specific reciprocal tariffs, are due to lapse in July 2026.

US Launches Fresh Investigation into India, 59 Other Countries on Forced Labour Charges

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) has launched a fresh investigation into India and 59 other countries, on March 12, 2026 to look into whether these countries have failed to ban the import of goods produced using forced labour.

The new investigation has been launched under Section 301(b) of Trade Act of 1974. This is the same section under which the USTR launched a different investigation on March 11, 2026 on India and 15 other countries to examine whether they were using excess manufacturing capacity to export to the US.

If the results of the investigation warrant it, the US can use this to levy tariffs on the countries. It has found have failed to take these sufficient steps to ban import of goods produced using forced labour.

Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme

The Union Cabinet on March 18, 2026 has approved the 'Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme for the period FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31' with an outlay of ₹ 2584·60 crore for installation of Small Hydro Power (SHP) Projects of an approximate capacity of 1500 MW. Key features of the scheme are following :

- The scheme will support small hydro projects (between 1-25 MW capacity) to come up in different states and will especially benefit hilly and North Eastern states with high potential for such projects.
- In North Eastern States and in districts with international border, central financial assistance to the tune of ₹ 3·6 crore per MW or 30%of the project cost, whichever is lower with an upper limit of ₹ 30 crore per project will be available.
- In other states ₹ 2·4 crore per MW or 20% of project cost, whichever is lower with a cap of ₹ 20 crore per project would be available.
- An amount of ₹ 2,532 crore has been earmarked for such projects.
- This is likely to bring in ₹ 15,000 crore of investment in the small hydro sector.
- The investment will also leverage 100% of the plant and machinery from indigenous sources fulfilling the objective of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- An amount of ₹ 30 crore has been kept to support state and central government agencies to prepare such DPR.

14th Ministerial Conference of WTO Held in Yaounde, Cameroon

The 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) will take place from March 26 to 29, 2026, in Yaounde, Cameroon. The ministerial conference is the highest decision-making body of the Geneva-based World Trade Organization (WTO). It meets every two years. The Indian team will be led by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

Fisheries subsidies, China-led Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) agreement, e-commerce work programme and moratorium, development and S&DT (special and differential treatment) and level playing field issues were among the topics that figured during the discussion at 14th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The draft statement contains a commitment from ministers to pursue work on advancing reforms following MC14. Ministers of member countries at 14th MC agreed to continue to engage in negotiations on fisheries subsidies, with the aim of making recommendations to the 15th Ministerial Conference to achieve the comprehensive disci-

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plines on fisheries subsidies referred to in Article 12 of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies. Simultaneously, WTO members put forward proposals on WTO reform. These included proposals from the Least Developed Countries Group, the African Group, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group, the United States, the European Union, China, Paraguay and the United Kingdom.

Ministers also adopted two MC14 decisions that were endorsed earlier by members in Geneva :

I. On improving the integration of small economies into the multilateral trading system; and
II. On enhancing the precise, effective and operational implementation of special and differential treatment provisions in the Agreements on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

The Director-General Okonjo-Iweala said the emerging Yaoundé package that members would be bringing back to Geneva include the following :

- The draft Yaoundé Ministerial Declaration on WTO Reform and Work Plan;
- The draft Ministerial Decision on Electronic Commerce;
- The draft Ministerial Decision on the Moratorium on TRIPS Non-Violation and Situation Complaints; and
- The least developed country (LDC) package.

At the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, India strongly championed the interests of the Global South, emphasizing food security, agricultural livelihood protection (PSH/SSM) and the restoration of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism.

e-GramSwaraj Platform

Ministry of Panchayati Raj has strengthened the e-GramSwaraj platform through integration with other national digital platforms. Integration with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) facilitates transparent, efficient and rule-based procurement by Gram Panchayats. Integration with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) enables Gram Panchayats to apply for internet connectivity at the Panchayat level. Integration with BHASHINI enables multilingual access to e-GramSwaraj. In addition, integration of weather forecast information supports timely decision-making, particularly in the areas of agriculture and disaster preparedness.

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State-wise Adoption Status of e-GramSwaraj for FY 2025-26

S.No	State Name	Total Number of Village Panchayats & Equivalent	Village Panchayat onboard	Total Number of Block Panchayats & Equivalent	Block Panchayat onboard	Total Number of Zila Panchayats & Equivalent	Zila Panchayat onboard
1	Andhra Pradesh	13327	13320	660	660	13	13
2	Arunachal Pradesh	2108	2108	0	0	27	26
3	Assam	2663	2186	182	182	30	29
4	Bihar	8054	8054	534	534	38	38
5	Chhattisgarh	11692	11687	146	146	33	33
6	Goa	191	191	0	0	2	2
7	Gujarat	14619	14596	248	248	33	33
8	Haryana	6227	6227	143	143	22	22
9	Himachal Pradesh	3615	3615	92	81	12	12
10	Jharkhand	4345	4345	264	264	24	24
11	Karnataka	5949	5949	238	232	31	31
12	Kerala	941	941	152	152	14	14
13	Madhya Pradesh	23011	23011	313	313	52	52
14	Maharashtra	28002	27934	351	351	34	34
15	Manipur	3175	161	0	0	12	6
16	Meghalaya	6884	0	0	0	3	3
17	Mizoram	855	841	0	0	0	0
18	Nagaland	1312	984	0	0	0	0
19	Odisha	6794	6794	314	314	30	30
20	Punjab	13236	13233	155	152	23	23
21	Rajasthan	13128	11184	361	353	37	33
22	Sikkim	199	199	0	0	6	6
23	Tamil Nadu	12482	12482	388	388	36	36
24	Telangana	12760	12674	565	547	32	32
25	Tripura	1194	1194	75	75	9	9
26	Uttarakhand	7817	7790	95	95	13	13
27	Uttar Pradesh	57695	57693	826	826	75	75
28	West Bengal	3339	3339	345	345	22	21
Total		**265614**	**252732**	**6447**	**6401**	**663**	**650**

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Environment, Ecology, Biodiversity and Climate Change

Seventh National Report on Biological Diversity

On 26th February, 2026, India submitted its seventh National Report (NR-7) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as mandated under Article 26 of the convention (*i.e.*, CBD).

Key Highlights of the Report :

Aligned with Domestic and Global Goals : NR-7 is aligned with India's updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2024-2030) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). The report indicates that all 23 National Biodiversity Targets are currently on track to achieve.

Strategy of Biodiversity Conservation : India's biodiversity conservation efforts is based on 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approach. It highlights the engagement of 33 Central Ministries/ Departments, integrating biodiversity safeguards across infrastructure, agriculture, forestry and coastal sector policies. India has substantially strengthened biodiversity-inclusive land and seascape planning. Citizens' contribution to biodiversity conservation has been strengthened through Mission LiFE' (Lifestyle for the Environment) and initiatives like 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Nam.'

India's Biodiversity Conservation Landscape

- Recorded Forest Area stands at 7,75,377 km^2 (23·59% of geographical area), of which forest cover constitutes 5,20,365 km^2 (15·83%).
- Total Forest & Tree Cover has reached 8,27,356·95 km^2 (25·17%), reflecting sustained spatial planning integration.
- The number of notified Ramsar wetlands of international importance have expanded from 26 in 2014 to 98 as of 2026.
- Conservation network in India encompasses 58 Tiger Reserves, 33 Elephant Reserves, 18 Biosphere Reserves, 106 National Parks and 574 Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- India supports 3,682 tigers, (over 70% of the global tiger population), 4,014 greater one-horned rhinoceroses, 22,446 wild elephants, 891 Asiatic lions and about 718 snow leopards estimated through first Snow Leopard Population Assessment (SLPAI).
- The first-ever river dolphin population reported a population of 6,327 riverine dolphins in the country.
- India has documented 22 agro-biodiversity hotspots and prioritized conservation of 769 Crop Wild Relatives (CWRs) across 171 native crops and 230 native animal breeds based on diversity, uniqueness, and agricultural heritage.
- India's National Biodiversity Authority has issued over 5,600 ABS agreements disbursing INR 140 crore, while 2,76,653 BMCs and 2,72, 648 PBRs engage local communities and traditional knowledge to promote biodiversity-friendly practices.

Institutional and Legal Framework for Biodiversity Conservation

- Conserved areas receive desired legal protection under the country's prominent laws (Indian Forest Act, 1927; Wild-life (Protection) Act, 1972; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; Biological Diversity Act, 2002; Van Panchayat Act, (1931).
- India's conservation strategy integrates in-situ and ex-situ measures, ranging from habitat restoration and species recovery programmes, to ensure the sustainable management of both natural ecosystems and agro-biodiversity.

Technological Intervention

- Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System, Satellite Telemetry, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), Camera Trap and DNA based tools for monitoring forest resources and free ranging species and conservation of genetic resources.
- A Single-Window named PARIVESH (Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single Window Hub) has been developed by the MoEFCC ensures transparency and ease of work.

Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity (Biodiversity Convention or CBD) entered into force in December 1993 and has been ratified by almost 200 nations. It was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. It has three objectives : the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources.

Three Protocols : The Convention has three protocols, which are—Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000), Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol (2010) and Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (2010).

In October 2010, at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Nagoya, Japan, the Parties adopted a new 'Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020' along with its 20 'Aichi Biodiversity Targets'. Aichi Targets are set of 20 targets, organized into five goals to reverse biodiversity loss.

In December 2022, at the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted. Among the Framework's key elements are 4 goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030. India is party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (ratified in 1994) and all its three protocols.

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India Submits 1st National Report on Implementation of Nagoya Protocol

India submitted its first National Report on implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on 27th February 2026, in accordance with Article 29 of the Protocol on Monitoring and Reporting.

Key Highlights of the Report :

- The report covers the period from 1 November, 2017 to 31 December, 2025.
- It highlights India's progress in implementing the Nagoya Protocol while contributing to Target 13 of India's updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).
- During the reporting period, India issued 12,830 ABS approvals, including 5,913 approvals by the NBA for entities under Section 3(2) of the Biological Diversity Act.
- India has also published 3,556 Internationally Recognised Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs) on the ABS Clearing-House, in accordance with Article 17 of the Nagoya Protocol, representing over 60% of the global total.

Benefits from ABS Framework during the Reporting Period

- ₹ 216·31 crore (USD 28·04 million) was mobilised through NBA approvals, of which ₹ 139·69 crore (USD 16·83 million) has been disbursed to benefit claimers, including BMCs, local communities, farmers and traditional knowledge holders.
- ₹ 51·96 crore (USD 6·56 million) was generated through approvals granted by SBBs/UTBCs for commercial utilisation by Indian entities under Section 7 of the Act. Furthermore, 395 NBA approvals incorporated non-monetary benefits, including capacity building, training, technology transfer and collaborative research.

India's ABS framework operates under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, supported by the Biological Diversity Rules, 2024 and the ABS Regulations, 2025, through a three-tier institutional structure comprising the National Biodiversity Authority, State Biodiversity Boards/Union Territory Biodiversity Councils and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at the local level.

UNEP Report on Safe Disposal of Unused Medicines

The United Nations Environment Programme's recent report 'Safe Disposal of Unused Medicines: A One Health Approach for National Systems' highlights the ineffective implementation of safe disposal practices leads to environmental pollution and heightened global health concerns.

Key Highlights :

- Global medicine use has risen by 14 per cent over the past five years and is projected to grow by another 12 per cent by 2028, substantially contributing to unused medicines.
- Improper disposal of unused medicines poses significant environmental and health risks, yet substantial gaps remain in the management of unused medicines within and across households, healthcare facilities and agricultural production.
- Pharmaceutical compounds are often detected in various environmental compartments, including wastewater, drinking water, surface water, groundwater and soil, either in their original forms or as metabolites.
- Improper disposal of unused medicines may lead to the presence of pharmaceuticals in the environment which pose significant risks to the environment, and to human and animal health. The risks include AMR, endocrine disruption and toxicity.

Strategies for Safe Disposal

- A One Health approach is key to addressing the disposal of unused medicines.
- Preventing the generation of waste from unused medicines at source is the first critical step to prevent the unsafe disposal of unused medicines.
- Comprehensive take-back schemes that encompass all stages—from planning to final treatment and monitoring—make it possible to return and appropriately manage unused medicines.
- Legal and policy frameworks play a central role in defining responsibilities, regulating disposal practices and addressing environmental risks.
- Targeted and national awareness campaign help promote waste prevention and encourage participation in take-back schemes.
- Successful pilot projects can be adapted to local needs for improving the safe disposal of unused medicines.

National Highways-Green Cover Index for 2025-26

The first-of-its-kind Annual Report on the National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025–26, released by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), provides a quantitative assessment of the plantations along the National Highways.

Key Highlights :

- The report has been prepared in coordination with the ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre in Hyderabad.
- The National Highways' Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) project uses 5 m-resolution Resourcesat-2/2A LISS-IV imagery to estimate green cover along NHAI-managed highways. The data were crosschecked against higher-resolution Cartosat-2S imagery for higher accuracy.

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- The report provides a scientific and quantitative assessment of green cover within the Right of Way (RoW) along the National Highways network, derived from the chlorophyll content of vegetation presence along the left and right sides of the highways.
- NH-GCI is reported as a percentage value that represents the proportion of land covered by green cover within the RoW of National Highways at a granularity of one kilometre.
- The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), chosen for generating the Green Cover Index, is a widely used Vegetation Index in agriculture, forestry, environmental monitoring to assess vegetation health, vegetation cover over time.
- In this first assessment cycle, approximately 30,000 km of National Highways spanning 24 States have been covered for the period July–December 2024. Subsequent annual cycles will track year-on-year changes to monitor progressive improvements in green cover.
- A dedicated web-based GIS portal, 'Spatial Information System for Monitoring of Green Cover Index along NH', has been designed and developed, which will be hosted on Bhuvan.

GCI-based Classification of NH

- Each National Highway segment is categorized based on its GCI value into the following classes : Poor (0-25%), Moderate (25-50%), Good (50-75%) and Very Good (75-100%).
- This classification aids in understanding green cover status across the corridor and facilitates comparison with historical or future assessments.

204 Indian Cities Breach Air Quality Standards : CREA

In March 2026, the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) reported that 204 out of 238 Indian cities recorded winter 2025-26 average PM2·5 concentrations above India's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) (*i.e.*, 40 $\mu g/m^3$). This was an increase from 173 cities that exceeded the NAAQS during winter 2024-25. None of the analysed cities met the World Health Organization's (WHO) PM2·5 guideline of 5 $\mu g/m^3$, as in the previous winter, when no city complied with the WHO limit.

The analysis was based on Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), covering the period from 1 October, 2025 to 28 February, 2026. Only cities with at least 80% data availability during this period were considered.

Key Highlights of the Report :

NCAP and Non-NCAP Cities : All 96 cities under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) and 142 non-NCAP cities exceeded the WHO PM2·5 guideline. 84 NCAP cities and 120 non-NCAP cities recorded winter 2025-26 average PM2·5 concentrations above India's NAAQS.

Indo-Gangetic Plain and NCR Cities : 75 cities in the Indo-Gangetic plain exceeded the national PM2·5 standard, while only four remained within the prescribed limit. In the National Capital Region (NCR), 28 of the 29 monitored cities recorded sufficient data coverage. None of these 28 cities complied with the national standard.

Most Polluted Cities : Ghaziabad was the most polluted city in winter 2025-26. It was followed by Noida and Delhi. The other cities in top ten were : Greater Noida, Bahadurgarh, Dharuhera, Gurgaon, Bhiwadi, Charkhi Dadri and Baghpat. Uttar Pradesh and Haryana accounted for four cities each among the top ten most polluted cities, along with one city each from Delhi and Rajasthan.

India's Megacities : Delhi (163 $\mu g/m^3$), Kolkata (78 $\mu g/m^3$), Mumbai (48 $\mu g/m^3$) and Chennai (44 $\mu g/m^3$) recorded winter 2025-26 average PM2·5 concentrations above the national standard. Bengaluru recorded an average PM2·5 concentration of 39 $\mu g/m^3$, slightly below the NAAQS limit.

State-level Data : Haryana recorded the highest number of cities (*i.e.*, 24 cities) where all monitored locations exceeded the PM2·5 NAAQS. Andhra Pradesh (nine cities), Punjab (eight cities), West Bengal (seven cities) and Gujarat (six cities) also recorded exceedances across all monitored cities.

Cleanest Cities : Chamarajanagar in Karnataka was the cleanest city in India during the winter of 2025-26, with an average PM2·5 concentration of 19 $\mu g/m^3$. The ten cleanest cities included eight cities from Karnataka and one each from Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya.

India's First Comprehensive List on Firelines

Scientists have compiled the first comprehensive checklist of India's fireflies, documenting 92 species across 27 genera. The study published in the journal *Zootaxa*, brings together more than two centuries of scientific records based on an extensive review of scientific literature published between 1881 and October 2025.

Highlights of Report :

- *Luciolinae* subfamily dominates India's firefly fauna, with 37 species, followed by *Ototretinae* with 31 species, *Lampyrinae* with 17 species and *Cyphonocerinae* with a single species.
- *Luciolinae* and *Ototretinae*, each having 11 genera were identified as the most diverse subfamilies.
- With nearly 25·33 per cent of firefly species, Western Ghats recorded the highest occurrence of fire-flies. It was followed by north-east and Gangetic plains, each accounting for about 22·66 per cent, while the coastal regions and the Deccan Peninsula accounted for 17·33 per cent and 13·33 per cent respectively.
- Trans-Himalayan and Himalayan regions recorded only 1·33 per cent each, while the island regions accounted for 2·66 per cent. Desert and semi-arid zones recorded no firefly species.

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Threat and Conservation Strategies

- Fireflies face multiple threats such as artificial night lightning, use of chemicals in agriculture, tree cutting and logging, changes in land-use, etc.
- There is an urgent need of nation-wide study for better understanding of insects' ecology and population trends.
- National and international collaborations are needed to assess the conservation status of firefly species.
- Establishing Firefly Heritage Sites, Firefly Sanctuaries and Firefly Bioparks for in-situ conservation.

India's Cheetah Population Crosses 50

As announced by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on March 9, 2026, the cheetah population in India reached 53, after the birth of five cubs at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.

The birth marked the 10th successful cheetah litter on Indian soil, taking the number of Indian-born cubs to 33 since the launch of Project Cheetah in 2022. It also marked Jwala becoming mother successfully for the third time.

The announcement of the birth of five cheetah cubs by Jwala came shortly after another cheetah, Gamini, brought from South Africa, gave birth to four cubs, marking her second litter in India. On February 28, 2026, the Ministry released nine cheetahs—six females and three males – received from Botswana into quarantine enclosures at Kuno National Park.

India's cheetah reintroduction programme Project Cheetah—was launched on September 17, 2022, with PM Narendra Modi releasing eight Cheetahs, translocated from Namibia, at Kuno. Later, 12 cheetahs were also brought from South Africa and released at Kuno. The species had gone extinct from the country in 1952.

Project Great Indian Bustard Captive Breeding Programme Enters 4th Year

On March 13, 2026, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change informed that the Project Great Indian Bustard (GIB) has entered the fourth year of its captive breeding programme with the hatching of two new chicks at the Conservation Breeding Centre of Rajasthan. The total tally of captive GIB currently stands at 70.

Great Indian Bustard is the State Bird of Rajasthan, and is locally known as 'Godawan.' It is a flagship grassland species, predominantly found in Thar Desert. Listed as 'Critically Endangered' in IUCN Red List, GIB belongs to the family *Otididae* and exhibits sexual dimorphism.

Major threats to GIB are : collision with overhead power lines, wind turbines; habitat loss and fragmentation; poaching and hunting; anthropogenic activities.

In 2021, the Supreme Court ruled that all overhead power lines across nearly 99,000 sq. kms of GIB habitat to be placed underground within a year. In December 2025, the Supreme Court ruling finalised revised priority conservation areas—14,013 sq. kms in Rajasthan and 740 sq. kms in Gujarat. Within these zones, no new wind turbines, no solar parks above 2 megawatt (MW) and no expansion of existing renewable projects will be allowed.

P.Darpan

Important Environment-Related Facts in News

Doomsday Fish	Two oarfish, commonly known as 'doomsday fish', were recently spotted on beach in Mexico. Oarfish (*Regalecus glesne*) can grow more than 30 feet and primarily feed on krill, plankton and other small crustaceans. They are deep sea dwellers, thriving in mesopelagic zone. According to an old Japanese belief, oarfish is referred to as the doomsday fish because its appearance near the surface is thought to be a warning of natural disasters.
The International Climate Initiative	It is an important German government initiative to support developing and emerging countries to implement and ambitiously develop the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) anchored in the Paris Agreement. Since 2008, India is one of the priority countries. In India, the interface function of the initiative is jointly implemented by the Indo-German Support Project for Climate Action in India and TERI.
Caulocera hollowayi and *Asura buxa*	The Zoological Survey of India has identified two new species of lichen moths in the Eastern Himalayas. These species had never been seen or recorded anywhere in the world before this discovery. Both species belong to *Lepidoptera. Caulocera hollowayi* was found near Golitar in Sikkim and *Asura buxa* was collected from Panijhora in West Bengal.
Water Cremation	The process of water cremation involves weighing the body, then heating it to 150°C in a mixture of potassium hydroxide and water for up to 90 minutes. Bones which are left are rinsed at 120°C, dried and pulverized into a coarse powder by a machine called cremulator. The carbon footprint of water cremation is seven time less than traditional cremation. Scotland has become the first country in the United Kingdom to allow water cremations.
Vela Carli	*Vela carli* is an endemic freshwater crab found only in the forests and streams of the Central Western Ghats. According to researchers, it is the first instance of gynandromorphy (a rare condition in which individuals exhibit both male and female characteristics) in *Vela carli*. This phenomenon is rare in crustaceans and has never before been reported in the freshwater crab family *Gecarcinucidae.*
Osbeckia zubeen-gargiana	It is a newly discovered perennial shrub species found in Assam's Manas National Park, named after renowned Assamese singer Zubeen Garg. It belongs to the Melastomataceae family, featuring bright pink four-petaled flowers and growing 2·5–3·5 meters tall.

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FOCUS 1

Fiscal Health Index 2026 : Evaluating States' Performance in Fiscal Matters

—Dr. S.S.S. Chauhan

NITI Aayog released the second annual edition of the 'Fiscal Health Index 2026' (for FY 2023-24) in New Delhi on March 11, 2026. In India's quasi-federal structure, State governments play an important role in the country's fiscal architecture. Share of States in country's general government debt is about one-third. It makes their fiscal trajectory central to national fiscal sustainability. States' roles and responsibilities in the development parlance have increased many fold over the past seven decades. It necessitates systematic assessment of State finances to ensure fiscal discipline, efficient resource allocation and long-term macroeconomic stability. The Fiscal Health Index seeks to provide such an assessment by enabling benchmarking across States and identifying areas for improvement.

The Fiscal Health Index provides a comprehensive and comparable assessment of the fiscal performance of Indian States. The Index has been designed as a data-driven framework to evaluate fiscal soundness, guide reforms and promote evidence-based fiscal policymaking across States.

The second edition of the Fiscal Health Index has expanded the scope of the framework. While the first edition assessed the fiscal performance of 18 major States, the second edition has included the 10 North-Eastern and Himalayan States, making the Index more inclusive and representative of India's fiscal diversity for 2023-24. To account for structural differences across regions, the North-Eastern and Himalayan States have been evaluated and ranked separately from the major States.

Sources and Interpretation of Data Used in the FHI 2026

The data used to calculate the Fiscal Health Index (major variables & sub-components under each variable) is sourced from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India. A comprehensive overview of budgetary transactions for all States for the period 2023-24 has been utilised for index calculation and subsequent analysis.

Five Major Sub-Indices are aggregated to form the Fiscal Health Index (Table 1 and Table 2).

Highlights :

(A) NITI Aayog's second FHI report highlights the following points in relation to 18 major States' performance in fiscal matters (Table 3) :

- Odisha has improved its score over the previous year and remains the top performer in FHI 2026, with Goa and Jharkhand also featuring among the top Achiever States.
- Gujarat and Maharashtra continue in the top five, while Haryana records a notable year-on-year improvement of three ranks.
- Bihar, Karnataka and Telangana have shown a mild recovery, whereas Punjab, West Bengal and Kerala remain at the bottom of the FHI 2026 rankings.

Table 1 : Fiscal Parameters for the Sub-Indices for 18 Major States

	Major Sub-Indices	Minor Sub-Indices	
1.	Quality of Expenditure	1·1	Total Developmental Expenditure/Total Expenditure
		1·2	Total Capital Outlay/ GSDP*
2.	Revenue Mobilization	2·1	State Own Revenue/ GSDP*
		2·2	State Own Revenue/ Total Expenditure
3.	Fiscal Prudence	3·1	Gross Fiscal Deficit/ GSDP*
		3·2	Revenue Deficit/ GSDP*
4.	Debt Index	4·1	Interest Payments/Revenue Receipts
		4·2	Outstanding Liabilities/ GSDP*
5.	Debt Sustainability	5·1	Growth Rate of GSDP* – Growth Rate of Interest Payments

*GSDP at Current Prices for FY 2023-24.

Table 2 : Fiscal Parameters for the Sub-Indices for NE/Himalayan States

	Major Sub-Indices	Minor Sub-Indices	
1.	Quality of Expenditure	1·1	Total Developmental Expenditure/Total Expenditure
		1·2	Total Capital Outlay/ GSDP*
		1·3	Committed Expenditure/ Total Expenditure
2.	Revenue Mobilization	2·1	State Own Revenue/ GSDP*
		2·2	State Own Revenue/ Total Expenditure
		2·3	(Devolution + Grants)/ Revenue Receipts
3.	Fiscal Prudence	3·1	Gross Fiscal Deficit/ GSDP*
		3·2	Revenue Deficit/ GSDP*
4.	Debt Index	4·1	Interest Payments/Revenue Receipts
		4·2	Outstanding Liabilities/ GSDP*
		4·3	Interest payment/ State Own Revenue
5.	Debt Sustainability	5·1	Growth Rate of GSDP* – Growth Rate of Interest Payments

* GSDP at current prices for the year 2023-24.

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- Overall, higher-ranked States have displayed stronger fiscal discipline and resource mobilesation efforts, while lower ranked States have exhibited higher non-developmental expenditure and less sustainable fiscal patterns.
- The Achiever States (Odisha, Goa and Jharkhand) are characterised by :
  - high own tax shares (above 60%),
  - relatively large capital outlay (around 4–5% of GSDP),
  - low fiscal deficits (below 3% of GSDP),
  - moderate debt levels (under 25% of GSDP) and
  - contained interest burdens.
- Front-Runner States (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka) and Performer States (Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan) have broadly maintained their positions with minor reshuffling, though their scores have moderated slightly compared to the previous year.
- Aspirational States (West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab) have faced persistent revenue and fiscal deficits often breaching FRBM norms, elevated debt levels of roughly 35–45% of GSDP, committed expenditure accounting for about 50–60% of revenue receipts, large interest payments exceeding 15–20% and relatively low developmental spending.
- Most States have strengthened on Quality of Expenditure, with Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh moving from Front Runner to Achiever, and Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh improving from Performer to Front Runner. Majority of States, retained their earlier category.
- Goa and Odisha have continued to record high State Own Revenue ratios, reflecting strong tax bases and greater fiscal autonomy. Jharkhand has slipped from Front Runner to Performer, while most other States witnessed only marginal reshuffling within the same category.
- Bihar has improved its position from Aspirational to Performer, signalling better deficit management. In contrast, Karnataka and Telangana have moved from Front Runner to Performer, and Kerala and Tamil Nadu have slipped further to the Aspirational group, highlighting emerging fiscal pressures.
- Odisha, Gujarat and Maharashtra have maintained low debt levels and contain interest burdens, supporting fiscal sustainability. Conversely, Punjab, Kerala and West Bengal have continued to face elevated debt and interest commitments, and several mid-tier States show rising leverage, though many remain within their existing category bands.

(B) The North Eastern (NE)/ Himalayan States have been ranked separately from the major States and classified into three groups *i.e.*, Achievers (Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand), Performers (Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura) and Aspirational (Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland) (Table 4). The following points highlight their fiscal performance :

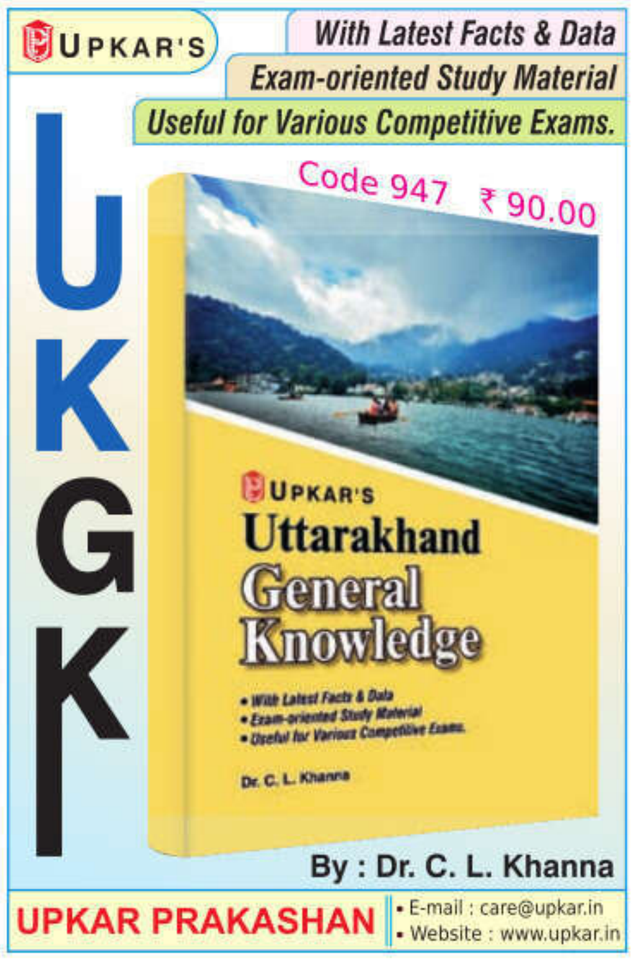
- Arunachal Pradesh ranks highest, followed by Uttarakhand and Tripura, reflecting stronger expenditure quality, revenue capacity and debt management, whereas Himachal Pradesh and Manipur remain at the bottom due to weak revenues and persistent fiscal stress.

Table 3 : Final Ranking of 18 Major States for 2023-24

States	FHI Score	Rank 2023-24	Quality of Expenditure	Revenue Mobilisation	Fiscal Prudence	Debt Index	Debt Sustain-ability
Odisha	73·1	1	71·2	80·3	58·7	95·8	59·5
Goa	54·7	2	49·5	80·4	45·0	56·8	41·9
Jharkhand	50·5	3	66·3	37·6	54·4	67·9	26·3
Gujarat	49·9	4	48·7	44·8	51·5	74·2	30·2
Maharashtra	45·0	5	36·9	52·7	35·2	76·0	24·3
Chhattisgarh	44·3	6	60·8	48·4	8·4	72·5	31·5
Telangana	44·3	7	57·1	60·8	30·0	53·5	20·0
Uttar Pradesh	41·9	8	50·9	28·1	38·8	60·2	31·7
Karnataka	41·7	9	46·8	43·2	33·1	61·4	24·1
Madhya Pradesh	37·8	10	60·8	32·0	35·1	58·9	2·2
Haryana	34·5	11	35·8	48·0	27·3	32·8	28·7
Bihar	30·9	12	58·3	2·9	27·4	48·0	17·8
Tamil Nadu	29·8	13	30·5	39·8	21·5	39·1	18·2
Rajasthan	27·6	14	43·7	29·4	11·3	32·1	21·5
Kerala	24·8	15	4·1	47·8	24·0	23·3	24·8
West Bengal	23·8	16	37·4	12·9	22·7	20·1	25·6
Andhra Pradesh	23·1	17	43·1	21·7	9·9	36·6	4·2
Punjab	12·4	18	8·1	29·8	5·9	2·1	15·9

Source : NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index 2026 Report.

Achievers States | Front Runners States | Performers States | Aspirational States



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Table 4 : Final Ranking of 10 NE/Himalayan States for 2023-24

States	FHI Score	Rank 2023-24	Quality of Expen-diture	Revenue Mobilisa-tion	Fiscal Prudence	Debt Index	Debt Sustain-ability
Arunachal Pradesh	59·5	1	97·6	40·6	59·0	62·0	38·3
Uttarakhand	52·5	2	28·2	83·3	26·6	66·5	58·1
Tripura	44·1	3	24·6	23·5	38·5	66·2	67·7
Meghalaya	41·5	4	66·6	38·2	12·8	57·8	31·9
Assam	39·1	5	30·9	58·3	16·4	69·2	20·4
Mizoram	33·4	6	28·9	37·8	29·9	69·1	1·4
Sikkim	32·5	7	27·3	44·8	10·8	56·5	23·3
Nagaland	27·1	8	15·8	20·8	21·7	41·7	35·3
Himachal Pradesh	22·0	9	13·2	64·2	3·0	24·9	4·6
Manipur	17·6	10	11·8	0·5	19·4	30·3	26·1

Source : NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index 2026 Report.

Achievers States

Performers States

Aspirational States

- Meghalaya and Assam occupy upper middle positions with mixed indicator performance, while Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim display uneven performance across different fiscal metrics.
- Mizoram has low score under debt sustainability, Sikkim scores low on Fiscal Prudence and Nagaland has lower score on Quality of expenditure and Revenue mobilization.
- Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya improved through higher capital outlay and developmental spending exceeding two-thirds of total expenditure, whereas Tripura, Himachal Pradesh and Manipur face crowding-out from large salary and pension commitments.
- Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh exhibit relatively stronger own-revenue capacity, while Tripura, Nagaland and Manipur have weaker revenue mobilisation and central transfers form over 80% of revenue.
- Arunachal Pradesh maintains lower deficits and occasional surpluses through controlled revenue spending, but several states continue to run deficits around 4–5% of GSDP due to rigid expenditure structures.
- Assam, Tripura and Uttarakhand maintain moderate debt burdens, whereas Manipur and Himachal Pradesh carry high debt levels of roughly 40–50% of GSDP with rising servicing pressures.

Recommendations

NITI Aayog has urged state governments to adhere to fiscal deficit limits under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003, through disciplined expenditure management, expansion of the GST base and stronger tax mobilisation.

- NITI Aayog's report highlights several policy priorities for strengthening fiscal health across States to manage deficits and debt trajectories more effectively. These include :
  - Enhancing revenue mobilesation and strengthening state own-tax capacity;
  - Rationalising committed expenditures to restore fiscal flexibility;
  - Improving the composition and quality of capital expenditure; and
  - Adopting medium-term fiscal planning frameworks.
- The report also emphasises the need to strengthen public financial management systems, improve transparency through the use of verified fiscal data, and monitor off-budget borrowings more closely.
- States should align their revenue expenditure with sustainable revenue growth, especially those facing widening revenue deficits.
- It also advised states to strengthen fiscal frameworks by broadening GST bases, enhancing their own tax capacity and curbing committed expenditure to restore fiscal flexibility.
- Other recommended measures include rationalising subsidies, adopting standard expenditure classifications, improving the quality of capital spending and implementing medium-term fiscal plans to stabilise debt and contain deficits.

Conclusion

The Fiscal Health Index provides a comprehensive and comparable assessment of the fiscal performance of Indian States. The Index has been designed as a data-driven framework to evaluate fiscal soundness, guide reforms and promote evidence-based fiscal policy-making across States. At a time when global public finances are under mounting pressure the sustainability of sub-national finances has assumed increasing importance. In this context, robust fiscal management at all levels of government has become essential to maintaining macroeconomic stability and supporting long-term development.

The Fiscal Health Index 2026 provides an important resource for policymakers, researchers and stakeholders by offering a transparent and data-driven assessment of state finances. Through its analytical insights and benchmarking framework, the Index aims to support informed fiscal decision-making and strengthen the foundations of sustainable public finance across States.

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FOCUS 2

Space-based Initiatives for Growth and Development of Agriculture

—Madhulika Singh

Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. It not only provide foodgrains, pulses, edible oils, fruits-vegetables-spices and many more commodities to millions of the people but also is big source of raw materials for agro-based industries. This sector also take care of thousands of live-stocks by providing fodder. Thus, the Indian agricultural sector is dynamic and plays an extremely important role in supporting the livelihoods of millions of people. Country's growing population is putting constant pressure on agricultural sector to grow more with declining natural resources. Optimised planning and management is urgently needed to ensure sustainable practices with minimal environmental footprints.

Agriculture forms the basis of the world's food supply. Soil conditions, water availability, weather extremes and climate change can represent costly challenges both to farmers and the overall food security of populations. Space-based technology is of high value to farmers, agronomists, food manufacturers and agricultural policymakers who wish to simultaneously enhance production and profitability. Remote sensing satellites provide key data for monitoring soil, snow cover, drought and crop development. Rainfall assessments from satellites, help farmers plan the timing and amount of irrigation they will need for their crops. Accurate information and analysis can also help predict a region's agricultural output well in advance and can be critical in anticipating and mitigating the effects of food shortages and famines.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, has been proactive in using the space technology in agricultural sector. The Ministry, since early 1980's has been funding various projects, under which Indian Space Research Organisation developed methodologies for Crop Production Forecasting. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)/ Department of Space (DoS) has undertaken several space-based programmes to support the agriculture sector. Major initiatives include :

- Forecasting Agricultural output using Space, Agrometeorology and Land-based observations (FASAL) programme.
- National Agricultural Drought Assessment and Monitoring System (NADAMS).
- Coordinated Horticulture Assessment and Management using Geo-informatics (CHAMAN) programme.
- Space technology Utilization for Food security Agricultural Assessment and Monitoring (SUFALAM) project and various collaborative programmes with State and other agencies.

ISRO/DoS has developed and contributed in development of techniques & tools for crop monitoring, yield estimation and resources management. Details of recent techniques & tools developed are as follows :

Crop Monitoring : The Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare established Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre (MNCFC), in 2012, for operationalisation of the space technology developed in the ISRO, for crop production forecasting. The Department has established another centre called Soil and Land Use Survey of India, which uses satellite data for soil resources mapping. An Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based crop mapping tool named Space technology for Agricultural Systems and Yield forecasting Algorithm ('SASYA') has been developed for C-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) from EOS-04 (RISAT-1A) and integrated into BHOONIDHI geo-portal of *National Remote Sensing Centre* (*NRSC*) /ISRO. C-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) is a widely used active remote sensing technology operating at frequencies of 4-8 GHz (typically ~5·6 cm wavelength), providing high-resolution, all-weather, day-and-night imaging of the Earth's surface. It is the workhorse for environmental monitoring, including sea ice, agriculture and deformation, commonly utilized by satellites like Sentinel-1. This tool has been made open to operational agencies, including Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre (MNCFC).

BHOONIDHI

BHOONIDHI is an innovative web-based portal developed by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) to provide comprehensive access to land records and geological data across India. It has been designed to enhance transparency and improve land management practices, BHOONIDHI allows users to view, download and analyze spatial data related to land use, land cover and soil characteristics. The portal enables access to an extensive archive of Remote Sensing data from 44 satellites, including Indian and foreign Remote Sensing sensors acquired since 1986. Additionally, BHOONIDHI facilitates the regional distribution of Sentinel and LandSat (8 & 9) data in India. By integrating various datasets, the portal empowers users to make informed decisions regarding land development, agriculture and environmental conservation. Ultimately, BHOONIDHI aims to promote sustainable land use practices and support effective policy-making in the realm of land resource management.

Agricultural Productivity and Yield Estimation : ISRO/DoS has developed a smart sampling technique for improving the Crop Cutting Experiment (CCE) locations to improve the crop yield estimation under Yield Estimation System based on Technology (YES-TECH) initiative of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). YES-TECH is a technology-driven yield estimation system, which offers methodologies, best practices and integration insights for accurate yield assessments at the Gram Panchayat level. Simultaneously, the Weather Information and

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Network Data (WINDS) Portal is a centralized platform that hosts, manages and processes hyper-local weather data collected by Automatic Weather Stations and Rain Gauges at Taluk/Block and Gram Panchayat levels. The portal enhances risk assessment and decision-making in crop insurance, agriculture advisories and disaster mitigation, supporting the agricultural sector and rural economy. ISRO/DoS has contributed in development of crop yield simulation models including semi-physical model and machine learning based model to reduce the dependence on manual Crop Cutting Experiments (CCE) in the process of crop insurance payouts under PMFBY.

Yield Estimation : ISRO/DoS has developed an automated geospatial crop estimation system (GeoCrEST) for crop yield estimation. The GeoCrEST system is operationally implemented on VEDAS (Visualization of Earth observation Data and Archival System) geoportal of ISRO for the utilization by MoA&FW. The GeoCrEST system has been designed to reduce dependence on manual Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs).

National Agriculture Drought Assessment and Monitoring System (NADAMS)

NADAMS project provides an early assessment of drought situation and thus helps the State Governments to take remedial measures and also use this information for drought declaration. This way, the assessments provided by NADAMS Project are beneficial for the farmers.

The agriculture drought assessment and monitoring, under NADAMS project, is carried out using multiple satellite data, rainfall, soil moisture index, potential sowing area, irrigation percentage and ground observations. A logical modeling approach is followed to classify the districts into Alert, Watch and Normal during June, July and August and Severe, Moderate and Mild drought conditions during September and October. The monthly Drought Assessment Reports are communicated to all concerned State and national level agencies and also kept on the MNCFC website (www.ncfc.gov.in).

Drought Assessment and Monitoring : ISRO/DoS in collaboration with the MoA&FW and State agencies has developed National Agricultural Drought Assessment and Monitoring System (NADAMS).

Satellite Data-service : As per Indian Space Policy-2023 the remote sensing data from Indian satellite missions is made open and free for all government users. Further, remote sensing data coarser than 5m spatial resolution is provided free and open to all users. ISRO/DoS is providing the free services of C-band SAR data of EOS-04 missions to MNCFC for operational crop mapping. Further, high-resolution satellite imagery for 13 States were provided, as part of the Agri stack Project, to strengthen digital infrastructure in agriculture.

Natural Resource Management : As part of the National Agricultural Land Use Mapping programme, annual (1:250 K) and quinquennial (1:50 K) and decadal (1:10 K) land cover and land use datasets for land use planning, food security and environmental assessments are being generated by ISRO/DoS to support the natural resource management activities in the country.

Precision Agriculture : Precision agriculture is a data-driven approach to farm management that can improve productivity and yields, thereby increasing the overall profitability of farming. It also helps reduce the need for inputs such as water and artificial fertilisers and pesticides, thus reducing the environmental footprint of farming. Advances in digital technologies like mobile phones, remote sensing using satellites, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cloud computing, as well as their growing affordability are making precision agriculture applications accessible for smallholder farmers in developing countries. Space-based technologies leverage Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) to enable precision agriculture and provide accurate positioning data. This allows farmers to precisely map their fields, identify potential areas for cultivation and optimise resource allocation. Farmers are empowered to not only adopt site-specific nutrient management and precise irrigation techniques but also plan crops optimally and improve yields and resource efficiency.

Value-added Agro-meteorological Products : ISRO/DoS operationally generates and disseminates through VEDAS geoportal (vedas.sac.gov.in), seven value-added agro-meteorological products to six Agro-Meteorological Field Units (AMFUs) covering more than 85 districts and 500 blocks under Gramin Krishi Mausam Seva (GKMS). Seven key value-added agro-meteorological products, generated using satellite data and used for providing advisories under the Gramin Krishi Mausam Seva (GKMS) and the VEDAS geoportal, are following :

1. **Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) :** NDVI assesses green vegetation cover to determine crop health and growth stage.
2. **Potential Evapotranspiration (PET) :** PET measures the atmospheric demand for water which is crucial for determining irrigation requirements.
3. **Surface Soil Moisture (SSM) :** SSM provides data on moisture availability in the topsoil which helps in determining sowing opportunities and water stress levels.
4. **Land Surface Temperature (LST) :** LST monitors maximum and minimum surface temperatures which is used to detect heat or cold stress on crops.
5. **Surface Dryness Index (SDI)** : SDI assesses the dryness of the soil surface to manage drought risks.

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FOCUS 3

Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA) : A Road Map Towards Viksit Bharat@ 2047

—Dr. Manish Dev

The Union Cabinet on March 18, 2026 approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA), with an allocation of ₹ 33,660 crore for developing 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across the country.

Key Objectives of BHAVYA :

- It aims to develop world-class industrial infrastructure, unlocking manufacturing potential and driving India's growth story.
- Plug-and-Play Area : To provide land with pre-approved clearances and ready-to-use infrastructure enabling industries to start operations immediately.
- To reduce logistics and operational costs for MSMEs and global investors.
- To revive legacy industrial clusters through technology and infrastructure upgradation and modernization of infrastructure.
- Advancing Viksit Bharat (self-reliance) through Manufacturing-led Growth Jobs, Investment and Opportunity at Scale.

Key features of the BHAVYA are following :

- Building on the success of Industrial Smart Cities developed under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) framework, BHAVYA will be implemented in partnership with states and private sector players.
- The scheme will deliver plug-and-play industrial ecosystems, enabling industries to move from intent to production with speed and certainty.
- With pre-approved land, ready infrastructure and integrated services, BHAVYA will significantly reduce entry barriers for investors.
- Industrial parks ranging from 100 to 1000 acres will be taken up for development under BHAVYA.
- Financial support of up to ₹ 1 crore per acre will be provided for :
  - Core infrastructure (internal roads, underground utilities, drainage, common treatment facilities, ICT and administrative systems).
  - Value-added infrastructure (ready-built factory sheds, built-to-suit units, testing labs, warehousing).
  - Social infrastructure (worker housing and support amenities).
- Support for external infrastructure will also be provided up to 25% of the project cost, ensuring seamless connectivity and integration with existing networks.
- Project selection will be undertaken through a challenge mode, ensuring that only high-quality, reform-oriented and investment-ready proposals are taken forward.
- The industrial parks will be designed as futuristic and sustainable ecosystems :
  - These Industrial Parks will be aligned with the PM GatiShakti Principles to enable seamless multimodal connectivity and efficient last-mile access.
  - Green energy and sustainable resource use with integrated underground utility corridors enabling a no-dig environment for efficient maintenance and uninterrupted industrial operations.
- These parks will set new benchmarks in industrial infrastructure, ensuring reliability, reducing inefficiencies and enhancing productivity across sectors.
- BHAVYA will extend to all States and Union Territories, creating lakhs of employment opportunities across the country and accelerating industrial growth nationwide.
- By fostering cluster-based development and enabling co-location of industries, suppliers and service providers, BHAVYA will strengthen domestic supply chains, promote regional industrialization and create new opportunities for millions of people.
- The scheme will benefit :
  - **Primary beneficiaries** : Manufacturing units, MSMEs, startups and global investors seeking ready-to-use industrial infrastructure.
  - **Secondary beneficiaries** : Workers, logistics providers, service sector enterprises, and local communities.

Role of the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) in the Implementation of BHAVYA

The National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) will anchor the implementation of the BHAVYA scheme which is aimed at developing 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across the country under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP).

NICDC will develop industrial parks on pre-approved land, with ready infrastructure and integrated services to facilitate ease of doing business. The parks will incorporate streamlined approval mechanisms, including single-window systems, to support faster establishment of industries.

The proposed 100 plug-and-play park will align with the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan. These industrial parks will focus on ensuring multimodal connectivity and efficient last-mile access. Emphasis will be placed on infrastructure planning, provision of underground utilities, to support reliable and efficient industrial operations.

NICDC has expertise in the development of industrial corridors

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and smart cities with the objective of expanding industrial infrastructure across regions and supporting balanced and sustainable industrial growth. This expertise of NICDC will play a crucial role in the implementation of the BHAVYA scheme.

NICDC is currently implementing 32 projects across 13 states, focussing on the development of greenfield industrial smart cities to enhance manufacturing competitiveness, attract investments and generate employment. NICDC is spearheading the development of world-class greenfield industrial smart cities to enhance manufacturing competitiveness, attract investments and generate employment.

While developing the DMIC project, Western dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) has been considered as the backbone while Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor has been considered as the backbone for AKIC project. For CBIC and BMIC National Highways-4 is considered as the backbone. For the ECEC, National Highways-5 which is part of the Golden Quadrilateral , the Kolkata-Chennai rail route is considered as the transport backbone. The proposed North-South, East-West and East Coast Dedicated Freight Corridors of Indian Railways will further supplement the existing transportation backbone for the corresponding industrial corridors. These projects, *interalia*, will give a boost to BHAVYA scheme.

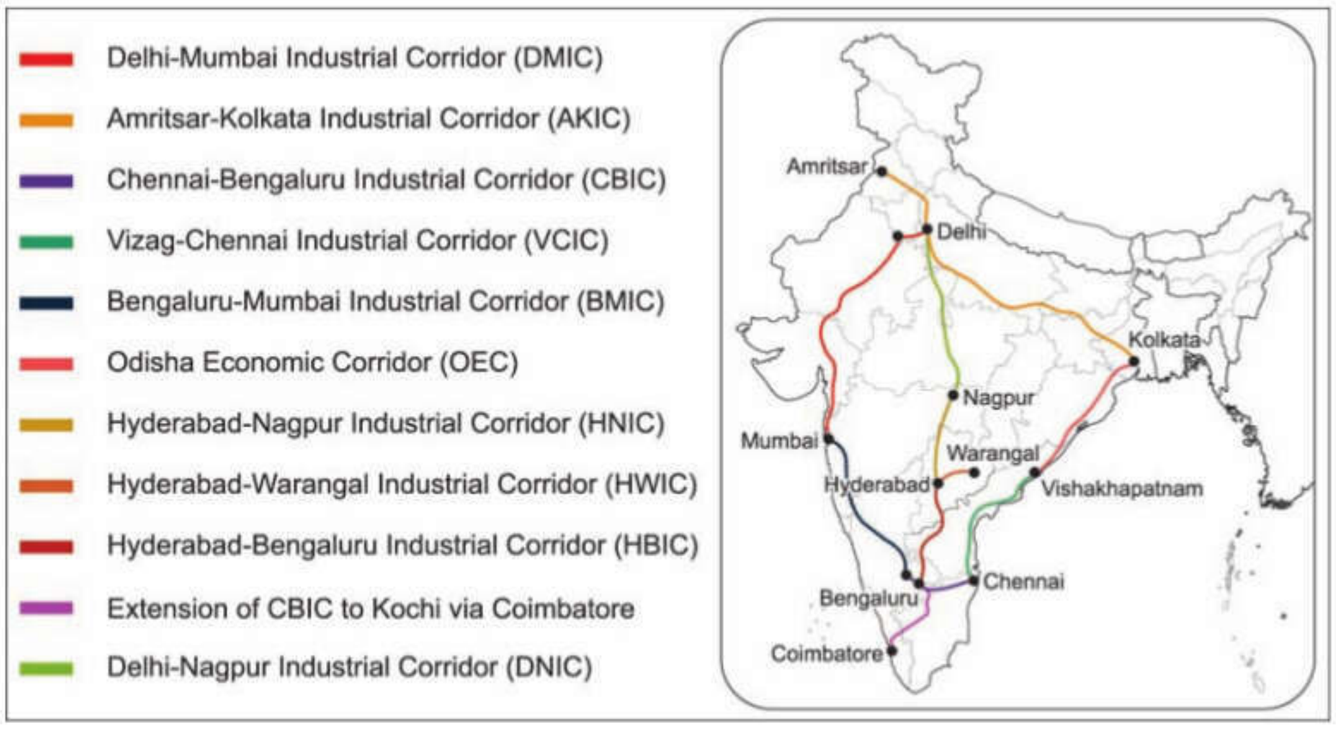
In addition, NICDC is also acting as the Project Management

Industrial Corridors and their Nodes Developed by The National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)

Industrial Corridor	Nodes
1. Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor	A. Dholera Special Investment Region, Gujarat B. Shendra Bidkin Industrial Area, Maharashtra C. Integrated Industrial Township - Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh D. Integrated Industrial Township - Vikram Udyogpuri , Madhya Pradesh E. Multi Modal Logistics Hub & Multi Modal Transport Hub (MMLH & MMTH), Uttar Pradesh F. Integrated Multi-Modal Logistics Hub, Nangal Chaudhary, Haryana G. Dighi Port Industrial Area, Maharashtra H. Multi Modal Logistics Park, Sanand, Gujarat I. Jodhpur Pali Marwar Industrial Area, Rajasthan J. Khushkhera Bhiwadi Neemrana Industrial Area, Rajasthan
2. Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC)	A. Raghunathpur Industrial Park, West Bengal B. Hisar Integrated Manufacturing Cluster IMC, Haryana C. Prag Khurpia Integrated Manufacturing Cluster IMC, Uttarakhand D. Rajpura Patiala IMC, Punjab E. Node near Kanpur for IMC, Uttar Pradesh F. Bokaro Node, Jharkhand G. IMC at Gaya, Bihar
3. Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC)	A. Krishnapatnam Industrial Area, Andhra Pradesh B. Tumakuru Industrial Area, Karnataka C. Ponneri Industrial Area, Tamil Nadu
4. Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC)	A. Koparthy Industrial Area, Andhra Pradesh B. Vishakhapatnam Industrial Area, Andhra Pradesh C. Chitoor Industrial Area, Andhra Pradesh
5. Hyderabad-Nagpur Industrial Corridor (HNIC)	A. Zaheerabad Phase 1, Telangana
6. Hyderabad-Warangal Industrial Corridor (HWIC)	A. Hyderabad Phase 1, Telangana
7. Hyderabad-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (HBIC)	A. Orvakal Industrial Area, Andhra Pradesh
8. Odisha-Economic Corridor (OEC)	A. Gopalpur-Bhubaneswar-Kalinganagar Node and Paradip-Kendrapada-Dhamra-Subernarekha Node, Odisha
9. Bengaluru-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (BMIC)	A. Dharwad Node, Karnataka B. Satara Node, Maharashtra
10. Extension of CBIC to Kochi via Coimbatore (ECKC)	Extension of CBIC to Kochi via Coimbatore (ECKC) A. Palakkad Industrial Area, Kerala B. Dharmapuri -Salem, Tamil Nadu
11. Delhi-Nagpur Industrial Corridor (DNIC)	The DNIC will have an influence area across States of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra

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Agency for the development of seven PM MITRA Parks under the Ministry of Textiles, supporting integrated manufacturing ecosystems in the textile sector.

These developments have contributed to strengthening India's industrial infrastructure and manufacturing capabilities.

The industrial smart cities developed by NICDC incorporate features such as plug-and-play readiness with pre-developed infrastructure, multimodal connectivity through road, rail and logistics networks, integrated planning of industrial and urban infrastructure and use of digital systems for monitoring and service delivery. The projects also include provisions for sustainable infrastructure such as green energy and water reuse systems.

NICDC-led initiatives are built on the concept of plug-and-play industrial parks—ready-to-use ecosystems where land, utilities, approvals and infrastructure are pre-developed, enabling industries to start operations quickly without delays related to land acquisition or infrastructure setup.

BHAVYA scheme is a well needed initiative towards ease of doing business. It will attract investors to these parks in a big way. Hassle free working environment will ultimately boost the industrial growth.

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Inspiring Youth

"Economic challenges can slow you down, but determination will take you to success."

Ritika Pandey

Topper—UPSC Civil Services Exam., 2025 (185th Rank)

'Pratiyogita Darpan' arranged an exclusive interview with Ms. Ritika Pandey, who has been selected in the UPSC Civil Services Exam., 2025. She deserves high appreciation and our heartiest congratulations on her glorious success. This important, thought-provoking and highly inspiring interview is being presented here in its original form.



A smooth sea never made a skillful sailor; we learn greatly from the storms in our life.

—Ritika Pandey

PD—Achieving top slot in the UPSC Civil Services Examination is no small feat; accept our heartiest congratulations on your splendid success.

Ms. Ritika—Thank you Sir !

PD—Were you confident of your success in this examination and how did you react to this news ?

Ms. Ritika—I had prepare well this time. I am very satisfied with my rank and with the happiness of my parents.

PD—What preference in services have you opted for and any particular reason for that priority ?

Ms. Ritika—IAS, IFS and I opted for IAS as my first preference, followed by IFS as my 2nd preference and IRS as my 3rd preference.

PD—What were your optional subject ?

Ms. Ritika—Anthropology.

PD—In how many attempts have you achieved this success ?

Ms. Ritika—This was my third attempt. I had reached interview stage, in my second attempt.

PD—You must have read IAS Toppers' interviews in newspapers/magazines; what inspired you the most ? Any particular success story which influenced your journey to this result ?

Ms. Ritika—During my preparation, I watched videos of several toppers such as Srushti Jayant Deshmukh (Rank-5, 2018), Shakti Dubey (Rank-1, 2024) and Akshat Jain (Rank-2, 2018). These videos served as an important source of strategy, inspiration and booklist, which helped me immensely during my preparation. I am also inspired by Zinnia Aurora, who had secured AIR 156 in UPSC-CSE 2024 and later scored AIR 6 in UPSC-CSE 2025.

PD—What was your approach towards Paper I (General Studies) and Paper II (Aptitude Test) during Prelims preparation ? How much time and effort you divided for each ?

Ms. Ritika—For each stage of UPSC Civil Services examination, including Prelims, I prepared self-notes, which I revised alongwith the current affairs. My strategy for Prelims was : Revising each subject 4-5 times; solving PYQs; giving sectional tests after completing each subject; and giving full-length tests after completing whole syllabus. I balanced GS Paper II (CSAT) preparation alongwith GS Paper I preparation.

PD—How did you manage to tackle the 'Negative Marking' in Prelims ?

Ms. Ritika—Questions asked in Prelims exam (GS Paper I) are bit random, hence, it has impact on accuracy. To overcome this, I had devised a strategy of attempting more than 90 questions to clear the cut off comfortably. For example, in 2025 prelims, I attempted 93 questions. In 2024, I had attempted 92 questions.

PD—The first step is the most difficult; how to prepare ? Which optional subjects to pick ? What to read ? How much to read ? Many such questions come to your mind when you really get serious about Civil Services Examination ? From where, did you get the right advice ?

Ms. Ritika—I used multiple sources for my preparation–websites, teachers' notes, toppers' notes, etc. I had also enrolled in an online foundational course, which helped me to clear my basic concepts and provided ample pratice of answer writing through tests. I also took crash course for my optional subject.

PD—You achieved the desired success in this attempt; how do you visualize your previous attempts ?

Ms. Ritika—In my previous attempt, my score in Mains was average in all the papers. However, I had scored good marks in GS-IV (Ethics). I got 121 marks in that paper. In interview, I had scored just 165 marks. Nevertheless, my previous attempts were stepping stone for success in my third attempt.

PD—While making final choice for optional subject, what's important and what's not ?

Ms. Ritika—Interest in the subject is the most important factor for choosing any optional in UPSC-CSE because questions are analytical in nature which needs good understanding of the subject to score well.

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PD—Give the basis of selecting the optional subject ?

Ms. Ritika—I chose Anthropology as my optional subject based on my interest, particularly it's emphasis on humans, their society, biology and their culture. In addition, I also went through syllabus and PYQs before choosing this optional.

Bio-Data

Name—Ritika Pandey

Father's Name—Shri Sanjay Pandey

Mother's Name—Smt. Babita Pandey

Date of Birth—April 28, 2002

Educational Qualifications—

10th—Manan Vidya School, Ranchi

12th—Manan Vidya School, Ranchi (97·2%)

B.Sc. Physics (Hons.)—2021, Delhi University (CGPA 9·7)

PD—What shift did you adopt in your strategy for Mains (Written) ?

Ms. Ritika—I had already prepared notes for my previous Mains attempt, which I refined it for giving 2025 Mains. I praticed answer writing and read current affairs. I have prepared my self-notes based on syllabus and PYQs.

PD—'Time Management' is a key factor while making preparations as well as in writing examination papers, be it Prelims or Mains Examination. How did you manage things ?

Ms. Ritika—Considering the stages and duration of this exam., one should complete their Mains preparation before starting Prelims preparation. One should give 4-5 months exclusively for Prelims preparation. The 3 month gap after Prelims should be utilised for doing revision, value addition and attempting mock tests for Mains exam.

PD—How did you prepare yourself for Interview ? When and which Board did you face ? How did your interview go on, how much time it lasted and what were the questions asked during the Interview ?

Ms. Ritika—For my last year's (2024) interview, I first started my preparation through online sources, followed by few mock interviews in Delhi, which helped me to overcome fear. I scored 165 marks in my 2024 UPSC-CSE interview. For my 2025 UPSC-CSE interview, I took guidance from a mentor who helped me how to answer questions in interview, especially on foreign policy-related questions. Discussion with peer groups in hostel also helped me a lot.

PD—Were you preparing for other career opportunities as well while preparing for your ultimate goal *i.e.*, Career in Civil Services ?

Ms. Ritika—No, career in civil services was my core dream since my school days.

PD—While the changing economic environment offers immense lucrative career opportunities in various sectors, still what kept you motivated towards Civil Services ?

Ms. Ritika—The job profile of civil services, which is unparalled, kept me motivated towards civil services exam.

PD—In your opinion at which Educational Level should one start preparing for Civil Services and what should be the minimum period of time required to prepare for Civil Services Examinations ?

Ms. Ritika—In final year of graduation, one should start preparing by knowing about the exam and its structure, books to read, where to take coaching and how to make notes. A serious preparation should start just after the graduation to clear the exam within in a year or two.

PD—What is your opinion regarding the general view that Science subjects have better chance to score than Humanities ?

Ms. Ritika—Many people choose science as well. For example, many aspirants are taking optional subjects such as Physics or even Engineering. Aspirants with diverse optionals, including science and humanity subjects, are achieving success.

PD—What is the importance of medium of examination for exams like CSE ?

Ms. Ritika—Students from both English and Hindi mediums are succeeding in this exam. Nowadays good resources are getting available in Hindi also due to AI, minimizing the gap in availability of materials in both mediums.

PD—Can you recall the exact moment when you realized the importance of Civil Services ?

Ms. Ritika—When I was in my 10th standard, the chief guest who visited our school was an IAS officer, which inspired me to pursue career in civil services.

Personal Characteristics

Favourite Person—Dashrath Manjhi

Strong Point—Self-belief and clarity

Weak Point—Lack of physical activity

Hobbies—Meditation, Exploring traditional cuisines of Jharkand

PD—Finally, at what point of time did you make up your mind to make career in 'Civil Services' ?

Ms. Ritika—Making career in civil services was my dream since my school days. After completing graduation, I finally decided to prepare for civil services, instead of doing masters.

PD—Was CSE a planned decision or your parent's wish ?

Ms. Ritika—It was both my dream and my parent's wish. I had to do it not just for myself, but for them too.

PD—Does the educational, financial and demographic status of the family of an aspirant have any impact on the preparation ?

Ms. Ritika—I faced lot of financial problems during my preparation. It has been a big issue in my life. My father had to borrow money so that I could pay my fee for foundation course. However, with sheer determination, we overcame every difficulties and eventually, got success.

PD—In your opinion what role do the Competition Magazines play when you are preparing for an examination like Civil Services ?

Ms. Ritika—Competition magazines provide detailed information which are important for preparing General Studies paper.

PD—How do you find Pratiyogita Darpan ? Do you find it close to your expectations ?

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Inspiring Youth

"Perseverance, dedication and consistency are the secrets of my success."

Yarasi Tusharika

Topper—UPSC Civil Services Exam., 2025 (393rd Rank)

'Pratiyogita Darpan' arranged an exclusive interview with Ms. Yarasi Tusharika, who has been selected in the UPSC Civil Services Exam., 2025. She deserves high appreciation and our heartiest congratulations on her glorious success. This important, thought-provoking and highly inspiring interview is being presented here in its original form.



Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great.

—Yarasi Tusharika

PD—Achieving top slot in the UPSC Civil Services Examination is no small feat; accept our heartiest congratulations on your splendid success.

Ms. Yarasi—Thank you Sir.

PD—Were you confident of your success in this examination and how did you react to this news ?

Ms. Yarasi—I was hoping to get into the final list this time. But as the success ratio itself is very less, I was not very sure of my selection. My first reaction was sigh of relief.

PD—What preference in services have you opted for and any particular reason for that priority ?

Ms. Yarasi—My first preference is IAS, followed by IPS (2nd preference), IFS (3rd preference), IRS (IT) as my 4th preference, IRS (Customs and Indirect Taxes) as my 5th preference, IAAS as my 6th preference and IRTS as my 7th preference.

PD—What was your optional subject ?

Ms. Yarasi—Anthropology.

PD—In how many attempts have you achieved this success ?

Ms. Yarasi—In my fourth attempt, I have achieved this success.

PD—You must have read IAS Toppers' interviews in newspapers/magazines; what inspired you the most ? Any particular success story which influenced your journey to this result ?

Ms. Yarasi—Common qualities in all toppers are perseverance, consistency and dedication they have for this exam. UPSC 2024 topper Shakti Dubey Mam achieved her success in her fifth attempt. Her perseverance and dedication, which she had for almost six years, was a great source of inspiration for me.

PD—What was your approach towards Paper I (General Studies) and Paper II (Aptitude Test) during Prelims preparation ? How much time and effort you divided for each ?

Ms. Yarasi—My strategy for Prelims was based on four pillars. The first pillar was focussing on static subjects. Nowadays, current affairs asked in Prelims are linked to static portions. My second pillar was PYQs, which helped me in filling the knowledge gaps and revising the strategy based on the evolving nature of exam. The third pillar is mock test, which is very important for analysing the knowledge application in real exam–like scenario. Mock tests help in active recalling. The fourth pillar was current affairs, for which limiting the source to one good newspaper, followed by one monthly magazine or yearly compilation in essential. For current affairs, multiple revision from limited resource is key for good score in Prelims.

PD—How did you manage to tackle the **'Negative Marking'** in Prelims ?

Ms. Yarasi—I had a strong grip on static subjects which enabled me to mark 30 questions correctly. Beyond that, I took calculated risks, only attempting those questions, for which I had knowledge. I suggest not answering those questions in which there is lack of knowledge, as it will lead to more negative marking. In Prelims, I attempted around 85 to 90 questions and left 10 questions, in which I had no knowledge.

PD—The first step is the most difficult; how to prepare ? Which optional subjects to pick ? What to read ? How much to read ? Many such questions come to your mind when you really get serious about Civil Services Examination ? From where, you did get the right advice ?

Ms. Yarasi—Toppers' interviews, Internet, mentorship programme were some of the sources from which I immensely benefitted in my civil services preparation.

PD—You achieved the desired success in this attempt; how do you visualize your previous attempts ?

Ms. Yarasi—In my first attempt, I couldn't clear Prelims. In my second attempt, I cleared Prelims and wrote Mains with Mathematics as my optional subject. In third

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attempt, I changed my optional to Anthropology and reached till interview stage, but couldn't make it to the final list. Nevertheless, my previous attempts served as stepping stone for my success in fourth attempt.

PD—While making final choice for optional subject, what's important and what's not ?

Ms. Yarasi—Interest in the subject is the most vital parameter for choosing the optional subject. Other factors which can be relevant are availability of resources and scoring potential of that particular optional.

Bio-Data

Name—Yarasi Tusharika

Father's Name—Mr. Y. Muni Gurava Reddy

Mother's Name—Smt. A. Malleswari

Date of Birth—March 7, 1999

Educational Qualifications—

10th—9·8/10 CGPA

12th—975/1000 Marks

B.Tech in Electronics and Communication Engineering

PD—Give the basis of selecting the optional subject ?

Ms. Yarasi—I chose Anthropology as my optional based on my interest. I went through the syllabus and previous year questions. The subject has the aspects of humanities, as well as science. Topics like Tribal Anthropology generated my interest to choose this optional.

Apart from interest, I also analysed previous years' toppers' marks in Anthropology and availability of resources.

PD—What shift did you adopt in your strategy for Mains (Written) ?

Ms. Yarasi—Mains preparation requires conceptual strategy, memorising and recalling facts and writing more number of points.

In Mains (Written), I included diagrams in geography questions, wrote examples and more number of points in History. For society-related questions, my knowledge in Anthropology was helpful in writing analytical answers.

For Polity-related questions, I used to be very thorough with current topics, for which I used yearly compilations of current affairs. Using data, articles and case laws in every questions was part of my strategy.

For answering social justice questions, I mentioned relevant government schemes, case studies, examples from states and NGOs, relevant data in my answers.

PD—'Time Management' is a key factor while making preparations as well as in writing examination papers, be it Prelims or Main Examination. How did you manage things ?

Ms. Yarasi—I used to give at least six to eight hours per day for studies. I increased it to 10-12 hours just one or two months before the exam, for both Prelims and Mains.

In addition to time management, I also prioritised stress management by taking regular break, cooking good food (which is my hobby), regularly going for a short walk and listening to good melodious songs.

PD—How did you prepare yourself for Interview ? When and which Board did you face ? How did your interview go on, how much time it lasted and what were the questions asked during the Interview ?

Ms. Yarasi—The Interview score in my last attempt (third attempt) was 160. To overcome the nervousness which I had felt in my last interview and to build confidence to face the Interview Board, I attemted multiple mock interviews this time. My interview preparation was based on DAF and current affairs. I had prepared every information in my DAF in detail with multiple dimensions.

Discussion of current affairs topics with my friends, attending current affairs sessions on Telegram Channel and attending one-to-one sessions helped me a lot. I practiced more on way of speaking this time.

In Interview, the Board asked me more situation-based questions such as how can I use my knowledge of electronics and communication engineering for improving communication in tribal areas. I suggested installing 'Tower on wheels' in such areas to improve communication. I was also asked question about how I would handle the Tirumala Ghee issue which recently erupted, since my mother works in Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). I suggested several interventions such as laboratory test of ghee for ascertaining its quality and introducing quality-based auctioning process.

PD—Were you preparing for other career opportunities as well while preparing for your ultimate goal *i.e.,* Career in Civil Services ?

Ms. Yarasi—I gave MBA entrance examinations such as CAT and XAT. I had appeared for interviews of MBA Colleges just before the result. In addition to that, I had appeared for state PSCs, SEBI and IB, but couldn't qualify it.

PD—While the changing economic environment offers immense lucrative career opportunities in various sectors, still what kept you motivated towards Civil Services ?

Ms. Yarasi—I wanted to pursue career in civil services so that I could utilise my capabilities for contributing positively to development of people, society and nation. I also learnt about positive contributions made by civil servants in society which kept me motivated to pursue career in Civil Services.

Personal Characteristics

Favourite Person—My Parents

Strong Point—Being calm and confident

Weak Point—Overthinking.

Hobbies—Cooking and listening to songs.

PD—In your opinion at which educational level should one start preparing for Civil Services and what should be the minimum period of time required to prepare for Civil Services Examinations ?

Ms. Yarasi—During the final year of graduation, one can start dedicating several hours for UPSC preparation. I started my UPSC preparation after my graduation.

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PD—What is your opinion regarding the general view that Science students have better chance to score than Humanities ?

Ms. Yarasi—In my view, students from either Science or Humanities background are equally capable. In terms of advantage, since student with humanities subject write subjective answers throughout their graduation, hence, they are at more advantage as compared to students from science background.

PD—Can you recall the exact moment when you realized the importance of Civil Services ?

Ms. Yarasi—During my childhood, inspiration for becoming civil servant came from my parents' telling inspiring stories of civil servants and their positive impact on society through their work. During my graduation days, as part of menstrual hygiene campaign, a visit to slum area near my college, which lacked basic facilities, strengthened my resolve to pursue career in civil services to make positive changes in society, especially for those who are deprived of even basic facilities.

PD—Finally, at what point of time did you make up your mind to make career in 'Civil Services' ?

Ms. Yarasi—After I completed my B.Tech, I decided to pursue career in civil services.

PD—Was CSE a planned decision or your parent's wish ?

Ms. Yarasi—When I decided to pursue my career in civil services my parents supported me in my journey and always motivated me to push harder.

PD—Does the educational, financial and demographic status of the family of an aspirant have any impact on the preparation ?

Ms. Yarasi—During preparation phase students from financially weak background may face difficulties in funding their coaching or procuring the materials. However, with the advent of AI, internet and online videos, one can utilise these platforms for their civil services preparation.

PD—In your opinion what role do the Competition Magazines play when you are preparing for an examination like Civil Services ?

Ms. Yarasi—Competition magazines play a very important role to cover exam-oriented current affairs.

PD—How do you find Pratiyogita Darpan ? Do you find it close to your expectations ?

Ms. Yarasi—Pratiyogita Darpan helps in building analytical writing style which is the demand of UPSC Mains (Written) examination. It is a completely good magazine which is helpful for both Prelims and Mains. In Prelims, the magazine is immensely helpful for providing facts which are helpful in answering objective questions. In Mains, the examples provided in the magazine helps in writing analytical answers.

PD—If a reader of PD, do you read IAS Preparation related articles published in it and did you find these constructive ?

Ms. Yarasi—Pratiyogita Darpan is already providing an excellent content especially for current affairs, government schemes which helps in building awareness, which is most useful for civil services preparation.

PD—Please give your comments on the PD Extra Issues Series on 'General Studies' and a few Optional Subjects ?

Ms. Yarasi—Yes, It is very helpful for civil services preparation.

PD—What is the secret of your success ?

Ms. Yarasi—Perseverance, dedication and consistency.

PD—To whom would you like to give the credit for your success ?

Ms. Yarasi—To my parents, sister, teachers and friends who always supported me during my preparation.

PD—Thank you very much and wishing you all the best for your future endeavours.

P.Darpan

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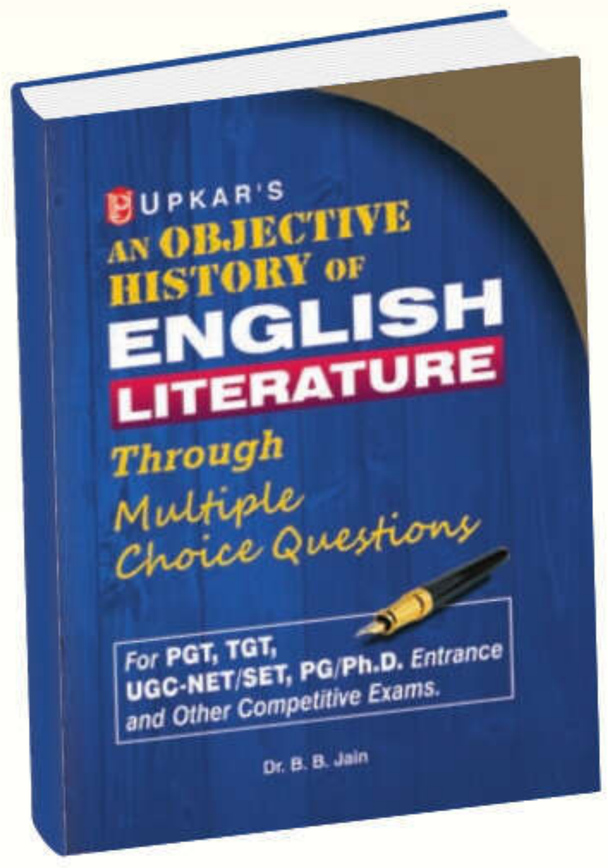
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World Panorama

AI Impact Summit and India's AI Strategy

—Arunoday Bajpai

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a buzz world in scientific and diplomatic discourse. UNESCO defines AI 'as systems with the ability to process data in a way which resembles intelligent behaviour'. It is considered as a disruptive technology as it has wide ranging impact on all fields of life ranging from economy and science to agriculture and education. Its transformative abilities have presented new opportunities and challenges. If it presents a new framework of growth and development on the one hand, it raises the issue of privacy and safety as well as leading towards a new digital divide on the other. All major countries are rushing to excel in AI development and uses. At present, China and the US are the leading player in the field of development and use of AI technologies. India, being a fast-developing economy aspires to develop, use and regulate AI for benefit of all. Among many efforts at domestic and global levels, the organization of AI Impact Summit by India in February 2026 marks a milestone in India's AI aspirations. India has joined the global efforts for the development, use and regulation of AI. AI impact summit held in New Delhi is the fourth in series of such global summits.

The First AI summit was held at Bletchley, London, in Britain in November, 2023. The Bletchley Declaration, signed at the end of summit pleads that the AI should be designed, developed, deployed and used safely. This summit focussed on the safety concerns in the use of AI. This Declaration was signed by 28 countries including India.

The Second AI Summit was held in Seoul, South Korea in May 2024. The Seoul AI summit resolved to move towards implementation of a network of AI Safety institutes and voluntary commitments from major tech companies on risk management in the use of AI.

The Third AI Summit, known as AI Action Summit was held on 10-11 February, 2025 in Paris. PM Narendra Modi co-chaired this summit with French President Emmanuel Macron. The primary aim of this summit was to collectively establish scientific foundations, solutions and standards for a more sustainable and ethical development of Artificial Intelligence. It resolved for working towards collective progress and the public interest. However, the US has not signed the final declaration of AI Action Summit, as she does not want any restriction on the use and growth of AI.

AI Impact Summit, India, February 2026

AI impact Summit is the fourth in the series of AI global summits. This summit has been organized by India on 19-20 February, 2026 in New Delhi. It focusses on three components : People, Planet and Progress, which prescribe its three broad goals :

1. **People :** AI must serve humanity in all its diversity, preserving dignity and ensuring inclusivity.

2. Planet : AI innovation must align with environmental stewardship and sustainability.

3. Progress : AI's benefits must be equitably shared, advancing global development and prosperity.

Delhi Declaration

The Delhi Declaration issued at the end of Summit was signed by 92 countries including the US and China. The main points of this Declaration are :

(1) The Summit was inspired by India's civilizational principle of 'Sarvajan Hitay, Srvajan Sukhay', which underlines that AI's promise is best realized only when its benefits are shared by the entire humanity.

(2) The summit calls for international cooperation on the seven identified areas of AI known as 'Seven Chakras' : AI for social and economic development; developing human capital; inclusion for social empowerment; Safe and Trusted AI; development of AI science; Resilience, Innovation and Efficiency; and Democratization of AI Resources.

(3) The Declaration resolved for democratization of AI Resources to enhance the accessibility of AI resources to all. It would be critical to enabling all countries to develop, adopt and deploy AI for the benefit of their citizens. During the Summit, the Charter for the Democratic Diffusion of AI was adopted, which is a voluntary and non-binding framework to promote access to foundational AI resources while respecting national laws. This should be noted that due to its voluntary nature, the US signed the Charter. The US was not willing to undertake any responsibility for mandatory obligations under the democratization of AI to other countries.

(4) The Declaration supported the wide adoption of AI and its resources for economic and social development. For this purpose, the Summit adopted a separate initiative known as Global AI Impact Commons, launched for the wide use of the public AI resources for the socio-economic development. However, Global AI Impact Commons is also a voluntary initiative that provides a practical platform to encourage and enable the adoption, replication, and scale-up of successful AI uses in different parts of the world.

(5) The Declaration recognized that promoting a secure, trustworthy and robust AI is foundational to

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building trust and maximizing societal and economic benefits. The AI development and use should be anchored in a policy framework that enable innovation while promoting the public interest throughout the AI's entire lifecycle. For this purpose, the declaration called for the establishment of a voluntary and non-binding Trusted AI Commons. This would work as a collaborative platform consolidating technical resources, tools, benchmarks and best practices.

(6) For the continuous scientific development of Innovation in AI systems, the declaration called for removing the structural barriers, which hamper such development. It also calls for increasing the availability of AI research infrastructure to promote the use of AI in scientific research and development across countries. For this purpose, it supported the launch of a voluntary and collaborative International Network of AI for Science Institutions as a platform to connect scientific communities and pool AI research capabilities across regions.

(7) The Declaration supported the enhance the access of AI resources to individuals as a tool for their social empowerment. It recognized that the AI holds the potential to uplift all sections of society by enabling individuals to access knowledge, cross-border AI solutions and services. This would enhance the participation of all in social and economic activities. For this purpose, the declaration calls for the development of a voluntary and collaborative platform.

(8) The Declaration is equally concerned with the development of human resources appropriate for the development and use of AI. It calls for AI human resource development though education, training, enhancing AI public awareness as well as upgrading AI literacy and ecosystems. Also, meaningful international collaboration initiative should be launched for the development of AI human resources.

(9) The Declaration recognized that the development and use of AI involves huge cost in terms of energy and other resources. Thus, there is an urgent need for promoting resilience, innovation and efficiency to minimize the cost of resources involved in the development of AI. It is well recognized now that beyond financial and technological resources, the development of AI involves huge energy and water resources, which further constrain sustainable development. Thus, environmental footprint of AI should also be taken in to account. The Summit called for adoption of Voluntary Guiding Principles on Resilient, Innovative and Efficient Artificial Intelligence, which would guide countries towards development of resilient and efficient AI systems.

In view of the above points of AI Impact summit Declaration, we can safely remark that it is very comprehensive and takes into account every aspect for the wide and safe use of AI systems for the socio-economic development. In this direction the Summit would contribute to strengthen international cooperation and multi-stakeholder approach to advance shared priorities. However, the chief weakness of the declaration lies in the fact that most of the commitments and obligations contained in the declaration are voluntary and non-binding, which may allow big players like China and the US to keep away from discharging those obligations. In spite of this weakness, the Summit highlighted the concern for safe, affordable and sustainable AI for all. The summit has placed India into the list of front runners in the field of development, regulation and safety of AI at national and global levels.

India's AI Strategy : AI for All

India's AI strategy is still evolving. At present, India's AI strategy focusses on AI development, its use in priority sectors like education, health and agriculture, safety and ethical concerns and global governance with the cooperation of other countries. The Indian strategy consists of the following points :

(A) Promotion of AI Ecosystem in India-AI for All : India supports the development of AI in India, so that its potential benefits are fully harnessed for socio-economic development of the country. For the promotion of AI, India has launched IndiaAI Mission in 7 May, 2024, with investment of more than ₹ 10000 crore. This mission consists of seven components and covers the entire cycle of development and use of AI.

These seven components of AI are :

1. IndiaAI Compute Capacity,
2. IndiaAI Innovation Centre (IAIC),
3. IndiaAI Datasets Platform,
4. India AI Application Development Initiative,
5. IndiaAI FutureSkills,
6. India-AI Startup Financing, and
7. Safe and Trusted AI.

The Mission aims to bolster India's global leadership in AI, foster technological self-reliance, ensure ethical and responsible AI deployment and democratize the benefits of AI across all strata of society. India has also launched the 'AI for All' programme, which is a self-learning online platform designed to raise public awareness about Artificial Intelligence in India. India has already purchased 25000 Graphic Processing Units for the use by Indian Starts up for developing AI models in India. India's Starts up company, Sarvam AI Starts up has already come up with three India specific AI language models, which were displayed during the AI Impact Summit in February 2026. During this Summit, India also unveiled the AI Cashbooks, which lists the uses of AI tools in various fields in India.

(B) Safe and Trusted AI : India wants to ensure that the development and application of AI in India should be trusted and safe. However, India has not enacted any separate law for the regulation of the AI. The safe and trusted use of AI would be ensured through the existing legislation like Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. The safe and trusted AI is also one of the seven components of the IndiaAI mission.

India's AI governance is evolving. The National Cyber and AI Centre (NCAIC), a government agency has brought out A National Policy Report titled 'AI Governance Framework for India, 2025-26', which has identified eight foundational principles for AI governance in India (NCAIC : 2025) : Human-

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Centric Approach, Risk Proportionality; Privacy and Design, Security and Design; Transparency and Explainability; Inclusiveness and fairness; Accountability and Traceability; and Continuous Assurance.

India has legal arrangement in place for safe and trusted AI use : The Information Technology Act, 2000 and Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

(C) International Cooperation : In order to make sincere and systematic efforts for international cooperation in the field of advanced technologies, India has setup NEST (New Emerging and Strategic Technologies) Division in 2020 in the Ministry of External Affairs. The NEST Division implements and coordinates the global cooperation in all fields of advanced technologies including the AI. India's AI governance approach involves international cooperation particularly in two aspects :

1. Development and Use of AI : To secure advance AI technologies through partnership with advance countries and platforms. For example, one of the components of India-US iCET initiative launched in 2023 is the cooperation in the field of AI, among other critical technologies. This has been replaced by a new framework called TRUST (Transforming Relationship by Utilizing Strategic Technologies) in February 2025, when PM Narendra Modi visited the US during the second Trump regime. Similar technological cooperation has been initiated with other advanced countries like France, UK and Japan. In 2004, India and UK have set up in 2004 the Ministerial Science and Innovation Council (SIC), facilitates high-level research, innovation and strategic partnerships, with over £ 400 million in joint funding Major areas of cooperation include Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, bio-imaging and cancer research India-UK science and technology partnership Dashboard was launched in November 2025. In February 2026, India has also joined the US led 9 countries Pax Silica initiatives, which among other things, calls for global cooperation in the field of AI and other advance technologies.

2. Global Governance of AI : India is regularly participating in the global efforts for the development as well as global governance of AI system. In the Global AI governance efforts India is actively involved in global conferences and dialogue to develop a global model of AI governance.

India is the founder member of the Global Partnership for Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), launched by the OECD in 2020. The GPAI seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by supporting research and applied activities in areas that are directly relevant to policymakers in the realm of AI (OECD : 2025). At present, it has 44 partner countries including India. India in 2023 under the GPAI initiative organized the 'GPAI Summit 2023' on 12-14 December, 2023 in New Delhi. India as Lead Chair of AI in 2024 has also organized Global Conference on AI in New Delhi on 3-4 July, 2024.

Also, India has actively participated in the series of global summits as mentioned earlier. The Fourth summit of this series was organized by India in February, 2026.

Conclusion

AI is a dual use and disruptive technology deeply affecting different aspects of human life like economy, research, education, medicine, security and others. But at the same time, it has the potential for misuse threatening privacy, inbuilt bias and breach of human rights. India has made sincere effort not only for the development and use of trusted and safe AI for all but also for evolving a global governance framework for AI as this dual use technology has global reach. In brief, India's AI strategy is rooted in the prevailing circumstances in India. Unlike the US and other develop countries, India's private sector has not so far developed capability and resources to undertake the task of development of AI system at global scale. Hence, India needs helping hand of the government for the systematic and sustained development and use of AI systems in India. Also, in order to prevent the misuse of AI tools, India is trying to put in place a robust legal and technological system for a trusted and safe AI. India has also moved on effective international cooperation with relevant stakeholders for the development as well as the global governance of AI.

Iran Conflict and its Impact

The present round of Iran Conflict started on 28 February, 2026 when the US and Israel launched a coordinated air attack with missiles and fighter jets on multiple location in Iran. The attack was surprising to the global observers as the US and Iran were in the mid of negotiations to finalize and sign a deal to resolve their disputes. The third round of high-stakes indirect negotiations between the US and Iran in Geneva regarding Iran's nuclear programme were held on February 26, 2026. These negotiations were mediated by Oman, which declared that the both parties are very near to final deal. As the war started, in the first day of the surprise attack by the US and Israel, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Hosseini Khamenei was killed alongwith 42 senior political leaders and military commanders as they were holding a meeting in the office of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The IRGC is the elite military force of Iran which was set up in May, 1979 by the first Supreme Leader, Ruhollah Khomeini in the wake of Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The killing of Supreme leader in this attack was a national loss for Iran. In response to the combined and surprised attack by the US and Israel, Iran conducted counter attacks with full ferocity against Israel and US bases/military facilities located across the Gulf countries in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE and Oman. The US has significant military presence in the Gulf region in the form of its air and naval bases. The American US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) is located in Bahrain and its largest air base in the Middle East is located in AI Udeid in Qatar. Iran's air attack is dominated by cheap drones (Shahed drone) and short range and medium range missiles. Iran does not have long range missiles capability to hit

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targets in US mainland. Though, the air attacks from both sides are still continuing, Iran has suffered more damage and human loss because its lacks the air defence capability which is required to neutralize incoming air attack. Thus, the US and Israel found an open and uncontested air space in Iran to strike at will causing huge damage and loss of human lives. According to one estimate in the first 12 days of war 1300 people were killed in Iran and another 12000 were injured and thousands were displaced in search of safe places. However, highlight of these attacks against Iran is the killing of more than 165 schoolgirls killed by US fighter jet strike on 28 February, 2026.

On the other hand, Israel and US have robust system of air defence, which has helped them to minimize the damage to property and human lives. Israel has three layers of air defence system-Iron Dome for short range targets, David Sling system for middle range targets and Arrow air defence system with long range capabilities. In addition, Israel has also developed a cheaper laser-based air defence system known as Iron Beam. In addition, America has already deployed THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defence) air defence system in many locations in the region. The US has already mobilized large and powerful naval force consisting of Aircraft Carrier, USS Theodore Roosevelt in Arabian Sea near Persian Gulf and Air craft Carrier USS Gerald Ford in the Mediterranean Sea along with many warships. These forces and air defence systems have helped the US and Israel to protect themselves from Iranian air attacks as most of Iranian drones and missiles have been neutralized by these air defence facilities. As on March 16, 2026, 13 US troops have been killed since Iran launched strikes against US military bases. However, there is a significant damage of physical infrastructure in Israel as many of the Irani missiles have penetrated mainland by escaping air defence system.

Regional Dimension of Iran Conflict

The Iran *Vs.* the US/Israel war is not confined to Israel and Iran only. In fact, it has spilled over the entire region of the Middle East involving the Gulf region, and Lebanon also. The 6 six Gulf countries namely Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE and Oman (members of Gulf Cooperation Council) and other regional countries like Iraq, Cyprus and Turkiye have got involved in this conflict, because Iran has launched missile and drone attacks in these countries on the plea that these countries have American bases and forces in their countries. Though Gulf countries have clarified earlier that they will not allow America their land to launch attack against Iran, but Iran claims that American is using these bases to launch attacks against Iran. Iran has further argued that she is attacking only the American bases in these countries. However, contrary to these Iranian claims, many non- military targets like oil depots gas storage facilities and other civilian targets in these countries have been hit in Iranian attacks. Qatar is the major natural gas producer in the region and it has announced the stoppage of gas production in many facilities and has issued ***Force Majeure***, to indicate her inability to fulfil gas supply contracts due to Iran war. Force Majeure is legal principle of Contract agreement which absolves a party to fulfil its contract obligations in case of any unforeseen eventuality like war or natural disaster. Iran has also launched few drones and missiles in Cyprus and Turkiye as NATO and western military bases are located in these countries. Though, these air strikes have been neutralized, some European NATO members like France and the UK have deployed extra naval forces in the Mediterranean Sea as a precautionary measure.

If Iran has spread this conflict in the Gulf region, Israel has spread it in the other areas mainly Lebanon. Israel has issued population evacuation order in southern Lebanon (South of Litani River in Lebanon). In retaliation of strikes by Lebanon-based Hezbollah militant group, Israel conducted heavy air bombardment with missiles and jets in the southern Lebanon. According to one estimate, till 12th March, 2026, more that 700 civilians were killed and another 1200 injured in Israeli attack. To cap it all, nearly 5 lakh Lebanese living in southern Lebanon have been displaced and have either fled to Syria or home lessor in scant shelters provided by the government of Lebanon. This has created a severe humanitarian crisis in Lebanon. Hezbollah is a Shia militant organization based in Lebanon and closely allied with Iran. Hezbollah conducts air strikes against Israel in support of Iran. Israel considers Hezbollah as a security threat. Because of this conflict, Lebanon has suffered huge destruction and humanitarian crisis. Israeli attacks are still in the progress.

A Brief Background of Rivalry Between America/Israel and Iran

The following events marks the hostile relations between the two sides :

1. The Iranian revolution of 1979 displaced the pro-US Shah regime. This resulted in hostage crisis and a 444-day diplomatic standoff (4 November, 1979–20 January, 1981) in which 52 American diplomats and citizens were held hostage at the US Embassy in Tehran by Iranian revolutionaries, soon after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. It marked a permanent rupture in Iran–US relations.
2. American President Trump cancelled Iranian Nuclear Deal in 2018 and imposed new sanctions against Iran.
3. Israel accused Iran of supporting militant groups in the region like Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Houthis in Yemen.
4. America and Israel launched air strikes against Iran on 12 June, 2025 to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities.
5. America placed three conditions before Iran to avoid war in January 2026 dismantling of nuclear programme, limiting the production of long-range ballistic missiles and stopping the support to regional militant groups. As negotiations were going on, the US and Israel attacked Iran on 28 February, 2026.

Impact of Iran Conflict

The ongoing Iran conflict has serious global impact, affected all countries in the region and beyond.

(A) Global Impact :

The global impact of Iran conflict can be understood under the following points :

1. Disruption to Global Energy Supply : The most immediate consequence of the conflict is the risk to

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global oil and gas supplies. Iran has declared the closure of Hormuz Strait, which is supply line of the crude and natural gas from the Middle East. The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. According to UNCTAD, 38% of global crude oil, 29% of LPG and 19% of LNG, traded globally, passes through it. Major oil producing countries dependent on the strait for supply include Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, Kuwait and Qatar. As a consequence of this war, the global oil prices have surged beyond $ 100 per barrel from nearly $ 80 per barrel before the war. It has also impacted the global supply of natural gas from the region. Many Asian countries like South Korea and Indonesia have introduced gas/oil rationing to check the demand of these energy resources.

2. Disruption of Global Trade and Supply Chains : War has caused disruption of trade in and through the region. The Middle East lies along key international maritime routes connecting Asia, Europe and Africa. This has also impacted the supply routes of trade to other regions. The main impacts are : Increased shipping and insurance costs for vessels operating in conflict zones and delays in global trade due to disrupted shipping routes.

3. Disruption in Global Air Transport : With the start of the war many countries in the Middle East has closed their air space due to fear of Iranian attacks. This has caused cancellation of many flights to and through the Middle East's leading airports like Dubai, Abu Dhabi and others. More than 46,000 flights were cancelled between February 28 and March 11, 2026. More than 92 million passengers were affected by disruptions in the Gulf region. This has caused huge disruption to air traffic not seen before this war.

4. Threat of Geopolitical Polarization : The conflict risks intensifying global power rivalries and strategic polarization. The possible geopolitical alignments include Western bloc consisting US, Israel and allied states and opposing bloc with Russia and China advocating restraint and supporting Iran diplomatically. It has been alleged in the new reports that Russia is providing intelligence to Iran about the position and movement of American military assets in the region to enable Iran to attack those assets. It is also alleged that China has supplied missiles and other military material to Iran. On the other hand, many of the European countries are unwillingly supporting the US war efforts against Iran. If the war prolongs and the strategic polarization continues, this regional conflict may assume global dimensions either by accident or design of some actors and within America it is disclosed that only 25 per cent of people are in the favour of war and majority of the citizens and political groups are opposed to war. The tall claims and counter claims by both parties have diminished the deescalation of war. American President Donald Trump has made tall claims that they have obliterated Iran's naval and air forces and as well as ballistic missile launch sites. Israeli Prime Minister has claimed that whosoever, succeeds as supreme leader in Iran will be killed. It should be noted that Iran has appointed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei as new Supreme Leader, who is the son of Ali Khamenei, who was killed on 28 February attacks in Iran. On the other hand, Iran has vowed to launch furious attacks against Israel and American bases in the region.

Impact on India

India is also affected by the ongoing Iranian conflict, which can be explained under the following points :

1. Disruption to India's Energy Supply : India is the third-largest consumer of oil resources in the world after China and the US. About 88 of India's crude oil and 50% of natural gas needs are met by imports from external sources. India is critically dependent on the Middle East for the supply of the Natural Gas as nearly 90 per cent of LNG imports comes from the Strait of Hormuz. Middle East supplies over 53 per cent of India's crude oil imports. The impact is already visible as India ahs increased the price of domestic gas LPG by ₹ 60 per 14·2 kg domestic cylinder. The commercial gas cylinder has increased by ₹ 115-144 per cylinder in different parts of the country. The supply of domestic as well as commercial gas is delayed by many days.

2. Economic and Trade Impact : The Iran war has not only impacted India's trade transaction in the region but beyond region as the trade supply routes passing through the Middle east are also impacted. India's export to many items mainly Basmati Rice, spices and fruits is affected. Rising oil prices have several macro-economic consequences, such as rising gas import bill, higher inflation due to rising fuel and transportation costs, pressure on the current account deficit and potential depreciation of the Indian rupee.

3. Safety of the Indian Diaspora and Stranded Travellers : The Middle East is home to nearly 9 million Indian expatriates, making the region critical for remittances and employment. The war has raised concerns for the safety of Indian workers. India has launched special operation for the evacuation of Indian travellers stranded in the airports of the Middle East.

4. Strategic Implications : India's strategic concerns arising out of Iran war are very complex and pressing. First, the war has threatened India's long-term connectivity initiatives. These connectivity projects include the Chabahar Port in Iran, which provides access to Afghanistan and Central Asia and the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) aimed at linking India with Europe through West Asia. Second, India follows the policy of strategic autonomy. But the war strains India's ability for diplomatic balancing in the region. Added to this complexity is the fact that the Indian Prime Minister visited Israel on 26 February, just before the day when Israel launched attacks against Iran. India has deep historical ties with Iran and has developed close ties with Iran. The war has made India's balancing act and pursue of strategic autonomy a very difficult task. That was the reason that India delayed the condolences for the departed supreme leader of Iran. Though India is in touch with all the stakeholder in the conflict including Iran and Israel but the strategic challenges before India are still looming large.

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Important Supreme Court Judgements

(February 2026)

1. "PHOTOCOPIES CANNOT REPLACE ORIGINALS : SUPREME COURT REAFFIRMS THE BEST EVIDENCE RULE IN DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE."

Case Name and Citation : Tharammel Peethambaran *Vs.* T. Ushakrishnan, 2026 INSC 134, Supreme Court of India.

Brief Facts :

The case arose from a property dispute in Kerala concerning the validity of a sale transaction executed through a Power of Attorney (PoA). The plaintiff claimed ownership over certain immovable property and alleged that the defendant had fraudulently executed a sale deed using a forged power of attorney.

According to the plaintiff, he had never executed such a PoA in favour of the defendant. Therefore, the subsequent transfer of property based on that document was void and illegal.

During the trial proceedings, the defendant attempted to prove the existence of the power of attorney by producing only a photocopy of the document instead of the original. The defendant argued that the photocopy should be accepted as secondary evidence under the Indian Evidence Act.

The Trial Court rejected this argument, holding that the defendant had failed to produce the original document or establish circumstances justifying the admission of secondary evidence. Consequently, the court declared the transaction invalid.

However, the First Appellate Court reversed the trial court's decision, accepting the photocopy as admissible evidence and validating the property transaction.

The plaintiff challenged this decision before the Kerala High Court, which restored the trial court's findings and ruled that the photocopy could not be relied upon without fulfilling the conditions prescribed under the Evidence Act. Aggrieved by this decision, the defendant filed an appeal before the Supreme Court of India.

Issues for Consideration

1. Whether a photocopy of a document can be admitted as secondary evidence without proving the loss or unavailability of the original.
2. Whether courts can rely on photocopies to determine property rights in civil disputes.
3. What conditions must be fulfilled before secondary evidence becomes admissible under the Indian Evidence Act.

Legal Provisions Involved

The Court examined the provisions of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, particularly :

- **Section 61 :** Proof of contents of documents (Sec-56 of BSA, 2023).
- **Section 62 :** Primary evidence (Sec-57 of BSA, 2023).
- **Section 63 :** Secondary evidence (Sec-58 of BSA, 2023).
- **Section 65 :** Circumstances in which secondary evidence may be given (Sec-60 of BSA, 2023).

The Court also referred to the principle known as the Best Evidence Rule, which requires the production of the original document whenever possible.

Final Decision of the Court

The Supreme Court upheld the judgement of the Kerala High Court and dismissed the appeal. It held that the photocopy of the alleged PoA could not be treated as admissible evidence because the conditions for admitting secondary evidence had not been satisfied.

Reasoning of the Court

The Court emphasized that the primary evidence rule requires parties to produce the original document to prove its contents. Secondary evidence such as photocopies can only be admitted in exceptional situations specified under Section 65 of the Indian Evidence Act.

Before secondary evidence is admitted, the party relying on it must first prove that :

- the original document has been lost or destroyed, or
- the original is in possession of the opposite party who refuses to produce it, or
- the original cannot be produced for valid legal reasons.

In the present case, the defendant failed to demonstrate any such circumstances. There was no proof that the original power of attorney had been lost or was unavailable. The Court cautioned that allowing photocopies without strict scrutiny would increase the risk of fraud and fabrication, especially in property disputes where documentary evidence plays a critical role.

2. "INSOLVENCY IN REAL ESTATE PROJECTS : SUPREME COURT CLARIFIES MAINTAINABILITY OF COMPOSITE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST MULTIPLE ENTITIES."

Case Name and Citation : Satinder Singh Bhasin *Vs.* Col. Gautam Mullick, 2026 SCC Online SC, Supreme Court of India.

Brief Facts :

This case arose from disputes relating to a real estate development project in which several homebuyers had invested substantial amounts for purchasing residential units. The project, however, suffered significant delays in construction and the developer failed to deliver possession of the flats within the promised time frame.

The aggrieved homebuyers alleged that the developer had defaulted on its obligations and that the project had effectively stalled. Consequently, certain allottees initiated insolvency proceedings under Section 7 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC) before the

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National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), claiming that the developer had committed financial default.

A complication arose because the real estate project was structured through multiple corporate entities, each performing different functions related to the project such as land ownership, construction, or financial management. The petitioners filed a composite insolvency petition involving more than one corporate entity connected with the project.

The respondents objected to the maintainability of the petition, arguing that the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code contemplates proceedings against a single corporate debtor and therefore a composite application against multiple entities was not permissible.

The dispute eventually reached the Supreme Court, which was required to determine whether insolvency proceedings could be initiated collectively against multiple entities involved in the same real estate project.

Issues for Consideration

The Supreme Court examined the following legal issues :

1. Whether a composite insolvency application can be maintained against multiple corporate entities involved in a single real estate project.
2. Whether homebuyers initiating insolvency proceedings must file separate applications against each corporate debtor involved in the project.
3. How the threshold requirement for initiating insolvency proceedings by homebuyers under Section 7 of the IBC should be interpreted.

Legal Provisions Involved

The case involved interpretation of provisions under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, including :

- **Section 7 :** Initiation of corporate insolvency resolution process by financial creditors.
- **Section 5(8) :** Definition of financial debt (including amounts raised from homebuyers).
- Relevant NCLT procedural rules.

The Court also considered the legislative intent behind the IBC, particularly its objective of ensuring time-bound resolution of insolvency disputes.

Final Decision of the Court

The Supreme Court held that a composite insolvency petition may be maintainable in cases where multiple corporate entities are closely interconnected and jointly responsible for a single real estate project. The Court clarified that procedural technicalities should not prevent homebuyers from seeking relief when a project is structured through complex corporate arrangements.

Reasoning of the Court

The Court observed that modern real estate projects are often developed through multiple corporate structures, where different companies handle various aspects such as land acquisition, construction, marketing and financing.

If courts were to insist that homebuyers file separate insolvency proceedings against each corporate entity, it would create unnecessary procedural complications and delay justice. Such an approach would also undermine the objective of the IBC, which is to provide efficient and speedy resolution of insolvency disputes.

The Court emphasized that the substance of the transaction must prevail over its form. If multiple corporate entities are effectively functioning as part of a single integrated project, it would be unrealistic and unfair to require separate proceedings.

The Court further noted that homebuyers are recognized as financial creditors under the IBC and therefore their interests must be protected. The legal framework should not allow corporate developers to escape liability merely by creating complicated corporate structures.

Thus, the Court concluded that insolvency proceedings should be interpreted in a manner that advances the objectives of the IBC and protects the rights of creditors, particularly homebuyers who are often the most vulnerable stakeholders in stalled real estate projects.

3. "ABSCONDING ACCUSED CANNOT SEEK ANTICIPATORY BAIL : SUPREME COURT REINFORCES ACCOUNTABILITY IN CRIMINAL PROCEDURE."

Case Name and Citation : Balmukund Singh Gautam *Vs.* State of Madhya Pradesh, decided by Supreme Court of India in February 2026.

Brief Facts

The case arose from a criminal investigation in the State of Madhya Pradesh involving serious allegations against the accused. During the investigation, the police attempted to secure the presence of the accused for interrogation. However, the accused failed to cooperate with the investigation and allegedly remained absconding.

Instead of surrendering before the investigating authorities or appearing before the court, the accused filed an application for anticipatory bail before the High Court. The High Court rejected the plea, observing that the accused had not cooperated with the investigation and was evading arrest.

Aggrieved by this decision, the accused approached the Supreme Court, contending that anticipatory bail is a statutory right available to any person who apprehends arrest and that the High Court had erred in refusing relief merely because the accused had not surrendered. The State, on the other hand, argued that anticipatory bail is a discretionary remedy and cannot be granted to a person who deliberately avoids the process of law.

Issues for Consideration

The Supreme Court considered the following important legal questions :

1. Whether an accused who is absconding or evading investigation can seek anticipatory bail.
2. Whether anticipatory bail can be granted to a person who has not cooperated with investigating authorities.
3. What factors courts should consider while exercising discretion under anticipatory bail provisions.

Legal Provisions Involved

The Court examined provisions relating to anticipatory bail under criminal procedure law :

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- **Section 438** of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 : Direction for grant of anticipatory bail.
- **Section 482** under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 relating to pre-arrest bail.

The Court also referred to earlier precedents interpreting the scope and purpose of anticipatory bail.

Final Decision of the Court

The Supreme Court dismissed the appeal and upheld the decision of the High Court.

The Court ruled that anticipatory bail cannot be granted to an accused who is absconding or deliberately evading investigation. The accused must first demonstrate bona fide conduct and willingness to cooperate with the investigation.

Reasoning of the Court

The Supreme Court emphasized that anticipatory bail is an extraordinary discretionary relief intended to protect individuals from arbitrary arrest or harassment. However, the provision is not meant to shield persons who deliberately evade the law.

The Court observed that an accused who remains absconding shows a lack of respect for the legal process. Granting anticipatory bail in such circumstances would undermine the effectiveness of criminal investigations and encourage accused persons to evade arrest.

The Court further noted that cooperation with investigation is an important factor while considering anticipatory bail. Courts must ensure that the remedy is not misused by individuals seeking to obstruct or delay criminal proceedings.

Therefore, the Court held that the conduct of the accused particularly his failure to appear before investigating authorities was sufficient ground to deny anticipatory bail.

4. "EQUALITY IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT : SIMILARLY PLACED EMPLOYEES CANNOT BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY."

Case Name and Citation : Pawan Kumar *Vs.* Union of India, decided by Supreme Court of India, in February (recent reporting).

Brief Facts :

The case concerned a dispute relating to service conditions and regularization of employees working under the Union Government. The petitioner, Pawan Kumar, had been working in a government establishment for a considerable period in a contractual or temporary capacity. Despite performing duties similar to those carried out by other employees who were subsequently regularized, the petitioner was denied the benefit of regular appointment and associated service benefits.

The petitioner argued that several other employees who were similarly situated in terms of duties, qualifications and length of service had been granted regularization by the authorities. However, his case was rejected without providing adequate justification. According to the petitioner, such differential treatment amounted to arbitrary discrimination.

Aggrieved by the decision of the authorities, the petitioner approached the High Court seeking relief. The High Court declined to grant the requested relief, holding that regularization is not a matter of right and that the government has discretion in matters of public employment.

The petitioner subsequently filed an appeal before the Supreme Court, contending that although regularization may not be an automatic right, the State cannot treat similarly placed employees unequally without a valid and reasonable basis.

Issues for Consideration

The Supreme Court considered the following legal issues :

1. Whether the State can deny regularization to one employee while granting it to other similarly placed employees.
2. Whether such differential treatment violates the constitutional guarantee of equality under Article 14.
3. Whether administrative discretion in public employment can be exercised arbitrarily.

Legal Provisions Involved

The case primarily involved interpretation of the following Constitutional provisions :

- **Article 14, Constitution of India :** Equality before law and equal protection of laws.
- **Article 16(1) :** Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

The Court also relied upon established principles of administrative law and service jurisprudence, particularly the doctrine that the State must act fairly and reasonably in matters of employment.

Final Decision of the Court

The Supreme Court ruled in favour of the petitioner and held that similarly situated employees must be treated equally in matters relating to service benefits and regularization.

The Court directed the authorities to reconsider the petitioner's case for regularization in the same manner as other employees who had been granted such benefits.

Reasoning of the Court

The Court observed that the principle of equality embodied in Articles 14 and 16 requires the State to ensure that individuals who are similarly placed are treated in a similar manner. Administrative authorities cannot arbitrarily discriminate between employees without providing a rational justification.

The Court clarified that although regularization is not an inherent right of contractual or temporary employees, once the government chooses to regularize certain employees in a particular category, it must apply uniform standards to all employees falling within that category.

Selective regularization without any objective criteria would amount to hostile discrimination, which is impermissible under the Constitution.

The Supreme Court emphasized that public authorities must act in a transparent, fair and non-arbitrary manner. Decisions affecting service conditions must be based on objective considerations rather than arbitrary discretion.

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5. "SELF-ACQUIRED OR JOINT ? SUPREME COURT SETS THE EVIDENTIARY TEST"

Case Name and Citation : Duraisamy *Vs*. Dorairaj, C.A. No.-002129-002130-2012, Supreme Court of India, 2026.

Brief Facts :

The dispute arose between members of a Hindu family over the classification of certain immovable properties. One party (Duraisamy) claimed that the properties in question were self-acquired, purchased from his independent income, and therefore not subject to partition among other coparceners.

On the other hand, Dorairaj contended that the properties were joint family properties, acquired using funds derived from the ancestral nucleus of the Hindu Undivided Family (HUF). It was argued that even if the properties stood in the name of one individual (Karta or coparcener), the source of funds indicated a joint family character.

The trial court and appellate court gave differing findings regarding the nature of the property, primarily on the question of burden of proof and existence of sufficient ancestral nucleus.

The matter eventually reached the Supreme Court to settle the legal position on :

- Presumption regarding HUF property.
- Burden of proof in property disputes.
- Role of ancestral nucleus in determining property character.

Issues for Consideration

1. Whether property standing in the name of a coparcener/Karta is presumed to be joint family property.
2. What is the burden of proof in establishing whether property is self-acquired or HUF property.
3. Whether the existence of an ancestral nucleus is sufficient to presume joint family ownership.
4. To what extent courts should rely on documentary evidence *Vs.* circumstantial financial capacity.

Legal Provisions Involved

- Hindu Succession Act, 1956.
- Principles of Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) under classical Hindu law.
- Indian Evidence Act, 1872. Burden of Proof (Sections 101–103).
- General property law principles relating to ownership and title.

Final Decision of the Court

The Supreme Court held that :

- There is no automatic presumption that property standing in the name of a coparcener is joint family property.
- However, if it is shown that the family possessed a sufficient ancestral nucleus, then a presumption arises that the property may be joint family property.
- In such cases, the burden shifts to the person claiming it as self-acquired to prove independent income and absence of reliance on joint family funds.

The Court ultimately ruled in favor of recognizing the importance of ancestral nucleus and clarified the shifting burden of proof doctrine in HUF disputes.

Reasoning of the Court

The Court undertook a detailed analysis of classical Hindu law principles and precedents. It emphasized that the concept of HUF property is unique, where ownership is not always determined by title documents alone but also by source of funds and family structure.

Key Reasoning Points :

1. No Presumption of Jointness by Default : The Court clarified that merely because a family is joint, it does not mean all properties are joint. Each property must be assessed independently.

2. Doctrine of Ancestral Nucleus : If a family has an ancestral property or fund that is capable of generating income, and such income is sufficient to acquire further property, then a presumption arises that subsequent acquisitions are joint.

3. Shifting Burden of Proof : Initially, the burden lies on the person asserting joint family property. Once ancestral nucleus + capacity is established, the burden shifts to the opposite party to prove self-acquisition.

4. Importance of Financial Capacity : The Court stressed examining whether the individual had independent sufficient income to purchase the property. Mere assertion of self-acquisition is insufficient.

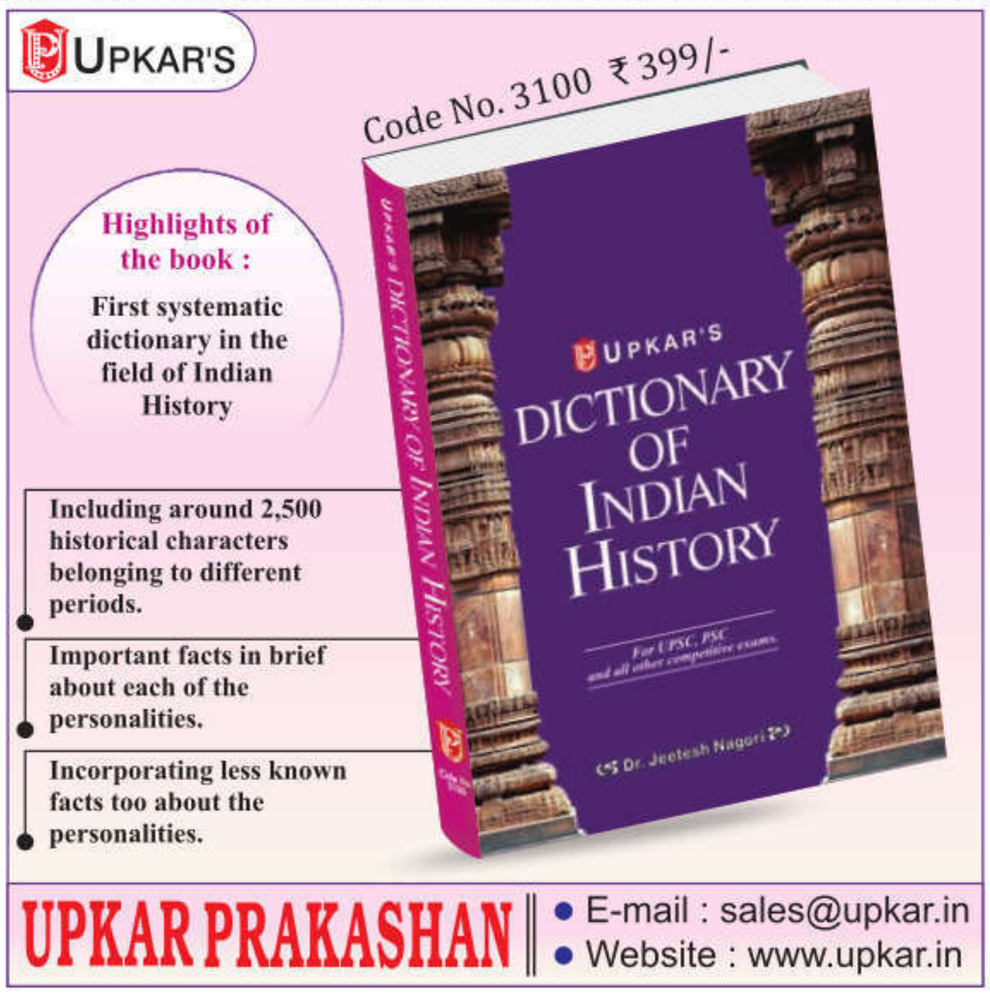
5. Reliance on Precedents : The Court reaffirmed earlier rulings such as:

- K.V. Narayanaswami Iyer *Vs*. K.V. Ramakrishna Iyer.
- Mallesappa Bandeppa Desai *Vs*. Desai Mallappa.

These cases laid down that existence of nucleus and its adequacy are crucial.

6. Evidence-Based Approach : The Court highlighted that courts must carefully evaluate documentary evidence, income sources, and surrounding circumstances, rather than relying on presumptions alone.

P.Darpan



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UPSC-CSE : A Life-Changing Journey Worth Every Sacrifice

—Atul Kapoor

In our life, there are very few moments that can genuinely alter its entire trajectory and cracking the UPSC-CSE is one of them. On 6th March, 2025, the Union Public Service Commission announced the results of the Civil Services Examination 2025.

A total of 958 candidates (659 men and 299 women) crossed the finish line of one of the world's most demanding selection processes. Each of these individuals deserves not just compliments, but genuine admiration because what they accomplished is extraordinarily rare.

Among lakhs of candidates who dared to compete, these lucky individuals whose names appeared in this final merit-list, it is not merely an academic achievement; it is the culmination of years of relentless sacrifice and lonely study sessions; this result has been truly satisfying as it will help them in coming out of this vicious circle.

Success in UPSC-CSE comes by conquering self-doubt through struggle and an inner belief that it is achievable, the goal is within your reach.

When a Dream Becomes Destiny

Yes, it is their unwavering commitment that they showed to face this fierce battle and prepared both academically and mentally to counter something larger than ordinary life.

Success in UPSC-CSE is not a small feat; this exam tests your intellect, your character and your psychological endurance and for this UPSC deserves compliments for doing it successfully for so many decades.

Recommending suitable candidates to serve India at its highest administrative levels is not that easy and once these individuals have cracked this beautifully designed exam-machanism successfully, these youngsters will go on to become IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS and other Group 'A' and 'B' Central Services Officers.

Every year, with CSE result, our bureaucracy gets strengthened and these youngsters will administer districts, lead police forces, shape foreign policy and influence decisions that touch millions of common citizens. The rewards of this examination are not measured only in salary or status; these are measured in legacy, in impact and in the rare privilege of public service with real power to change things.

Top Five Achievers' Profile

The top-most rank has been cornered by **Anuj Agnihotri** in the UPSC-CSE 2025. A medico, (MBBS) from AIIMS, Jodhpur has shown faith in his own subject and chose **Medical Science** as his optional subject. If I look back, last time 1st ranker with **Medical Science** as optional subject was Shena Aggarwal (AIR 1; CSE 2011).

An engineering graduate Rajeshwari Suve M (B.E. in Electrical & Electronics Engineering from Anna University, Chennai) has secured second rank. She had opted Sociology as her optional subject. Akansh Dhull, a commerce graduate from University of Delhi, grabbed the third rank with Commerce & Accountancy as his optional subject. The fourth rank has gone to Raghav Jhunjhunwala, B.A. Economics (Hons.) from University of Delhi. He picked up his own subject – Economics–as his optional subject.

Ishan Bhatnagar, B.A. LLB (Hons.) from National Law University, Delhi secured fifth rank with Sociology as his optional subject.

For me the biggest take away from top 5 ranks is that three out of five toppers had chosen their own subjects and this is a strategic move. Let's delve deep and look out for some more useful insights.

Marks Secured by Top 25

One thing that catches attention is the Personality Test (Interview) scores and it is a pleasant surprise. Lots of 200+ marks are visible in the list.

Among top 25, including the first rank Anuj Agnihotri as many as 13 candidates have scored 200+ marks to fortify their place in the merit-list.

The candidate with the highest marks in Interview is Tejaswini Singh (AIR 62) who has secured 225 marks out of 275. Though, despite that outstanding performance in Interview she has to settle for rank 62, due to her performance in Mains (Written).

We spot two candidates, Ishan Bhatnagar (AIR 5) and Zinnia Aurora (AIR 6) with 215 marks in Interview and three with 209 marks (Yashaswi Raj Vardhan, Nisar Dishant Amrutlal and Ifra Shams Ansari).

In CSE 2024, we saw 1st ranker's scores dipping to a new low (Shakti Dubey–1043 marks) and now, in CSE

	Number of Candidates Applied	Number of Candidates Appeared	Number of Candidates Qualified for Mains (Written)
CSE Prelims 2025	937876	576793	14161

	Candidate Appeared	Candidates Qualified for the Personality Test
CSE Mains (Written) 2025	14161	2736

	Candidate Appeared	Candidates Recommended for Appointment to Various Services
Personality Test (Interview) 2025	2736	958

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2025, 1st ranker's marks (Anuj Agnihotri – 1071 marks) show a partial recovery.

The performance of women candidates continues to be outstanding. In recent years, CSE 2021, 2022 and 2024, we have seen girls grabbing the topmost rank. This time, Rajeshwari Suve M (1067 marks) missed the topmost rank by just 4 marks and secured second spot in the merit-list. Again, it is an outstanding performance and the overall performance by women candidates has been quite impressive.

If we talk of influence of Mains (Written) marks, Surbhi Yadav (AIR 14) with 862 marks and Chitwan Jain (AIR 17) with 850 marks could ensure their place in top 20 based on their Mains (Written) strength.

As we move down in the merit-list, there so many such instances that catch attention.

Have a glance at the top 25 list and take a clue from their performance to set your targets and how you plan will reflect in your final results.

Cut-Off Marks for CSE 2025–Minimum Qualifying Marks

In the Civil Services Examination 2025, the minimum qualifying standards/marks secured by the last recommended candidate in various categories at various stages are as under :

Exam.	General	EWS	OBC	SC	ST	PwBD-1	PwBD-2	PwBD-3	PwBD-5
CS (Prelim)*	92·66	89·34	92·00	84·00	82·66	76·66	54·66	40·66	40·66
CS (Mains)#	739	706	717	700	694	703	708	536	451
CS (Final)	963	926	931	905	902	917	944	804	631

*Cut off marks on the basis of GS Paper-I only. GS Paper-II was of qualifying nature with 33% marks.

Subject to 10% marks in each of the seven competitive papers *i.e.*, Essay, GS-I, GS-II, GS-III, GS-IV, Optional-I and Optional-II.

To explain it, I am taking General category marks as reference. Prelims cut-off is based on GS Paper I performance, but GS Paper II acts as a spoiler for many and this is one of the major factors in a lower cut-off.

This cut-off shows that a candidate with 92·66 marks or above would have got eligibility to appear in Main Examination (Written) 2025.

Mains cut-off of 739 marks out of total 1750 marks shows that any candidate with 739 marks or above would have got chance to appear in Personality Test 2025.

Talking simple arithmetic, final cut-off of 963 explains that the candidate with 739 marks would have required scoring at least 224 marks to find a place in the merit-list. It is too much for asking and scoring anything above 200 is not that easy. Moreover, not everyone appearing in Interview gets selected and obviously, the advantage is always with those candidates whose performance in Mains (Written) has been good.

But UPSC-CSE is an arena where candidates get a fair chance to change their fortunes with outstanding performance in the last stage–Personality Test.

Minute scanning of the result reveals that a candidate at AIR 456, Ritika Bhan managed to get in to merit-list with 776 marks in Mains (Written) and 187 marks in Interview.

Sania Seervi (AIR 450) with a Mains (Written) score of 757 managed to get a place in the merit list with a decent Interview score of 206 marks.

Even with this outstanding performance in Interview, she can't expect post in Indian Administrative Service (IAS) due to comparatively low score in Mains (Written).

Whatever we say, for me a place in the final merit-list is a big achievement and everyone deserves compliments and appreciation.

Marks of Top 25 Selected Candidates in UPSC-CSE 2025

	Name	Total Marks	Mains (Written)	Personality Test (Interview)
1	Anuj Agnihotri	1071	867	204
2	Rajeshwari Suve M	1067	865	202
3	Akansh Dhull	1057	864	193
4	Raghav Jhunjhunwala	1042	847	195
5	Ishan Bhatnagar	1038	823	215
6	Zinnia Aurora	1037	822	215
7	A.R. Rajah Mohaideen	1035	834	201
8	Pakshal Secretry	1035	837	198
9	Astha Jain	1033	835	198
10	Ujjwal Priyank	1033	846	187
11	Yashaswi Raj Vardhan	1032	823	209
12	Akshit Bhardwaj	1031	841	190
13	Ananya Sharma	1028	822	206
14	Surabhi Yadav	1027	862	165
15	Simrandeep Kaur	1026	825	201
16	Monika Srivastava	1025	819	206
17	Chitwan Jain	1025	850	175
18	Sruthii R	1025	825	200
19	Nisar Dishant Amrutlal	1024	815	209
20	Ravi Raaz	1024	823	201
21	Shubham Singh	1024	837	187
22	Geetika Arora	1023	831	192
23	Jeenu Sri Jaswanth Chandra	1023	832	191
24	Ifra Shams Ansari	1022	813	209
25	Bhavika Chopra	1022	829	193

So, What should You do if You are eyeing IAS ?

You need to have a target to score 780-860 marks in Mains (Written).

Probable Scenarios to Expect a Place in IAS :

- If you go by CSE 2025 cut-off, your Mains score at the lower

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end of this range, you will need to score 220+ marks in Interview.

- If your Mains marks touch the upper band and could manage an average score of 160+ marks in Interview.
- If able to score anywhere near top end and a decent Interview performance of 200+ marks, you can expect to find your name amongst top ranks.

Similarly, candidates belonging to other categories can work out their targets and work accordingly for the ensuing Mains. However, it is difficult to predict the result, but certainly with sensible targets, you can always keep your hopes alive.

Cut-Off CSE 2023-2025 : Three-Year Comparison (General Category)

With the lowest ever cut-off in Prelims 2023 (75·41 out of 200 marks), it seems the cut-off is on gradual recovery path.

Preliminary Examination Cut-off :

CSE 2023—75·41 marks

CSE 2024—87·98 marks

CSE 2025—92·66 marks

One can say that it is improving year after year, but the fact is that the CSE 2023 saw a really tough General Studies Paper I and in the subsequent year CSE 2024, Prelims had less surprises and CSE 2025, was reasonably moderate and that clearly reflects in the cut-off trends.

When we analyse the cut-offs, we occasionally miss the details and in no way we can extrapolate the Prelims trends to continue in Mains (Written) and final result cut-offs.

Think of a situation where a candidate keeps last year's cut-off as benchmark, in that situation a shift of 4-5 mark only would have worked against that candidate. As an aspirant, you need to understand that it is not a question of having a level of competence that a particular year's cut-off can determine, every year, it is relative performance that determines the cut-off that emerges from the overall performance of all the candidates taking a plunge in a particular year.

Cut-off is a data point that is determined when the final result is prepared; it is not something that is you set in advance.

Despite relatively easier question papers in CSE Prelims 2025, it is evident that the preparation level of the candidates is not uniform. It may sound crude, but so called excellent preparation with help of coaching institutes, experts, mentors is not helping candidates to cross the threshold.

Yes, it is a wake-up call just before Prelims 2026. You can't predict what kind of paper you are going to face in Prelims 2026, but if you set a bar much above the cut-off, your consistent efforts would certainly help you in finding yourself comfortably above the Prelims cut-off even if it goes up a few more marks.

Main Examination Cut-off :

CSE 2023—741 marks

CSE 2024—729 marks

CSE 2025—739 marks

This clearly indicates that while Prelims cut-off shows continued recovery, in Mains cut-off there has been a sharp dip in CSE 2024 and now, CSE 2025 cut-off shows a slight recovery. Still the cut-off is less than what we had seen in CSE 2023.

This is another indication that at Mains level, your competition is stiffer than what you face at Prelims level. One who has studied for over a year and cracks Prelims, it is an indication that he/she has prepared diligently and in the preparation journey, he/she has improved his/her knowledge base incrementally and that proves handy when one gets ready to face the next level – Main Examination.

The final result cut-off mirrors the Main Examination cut-off trends, but the important observation is that cut-off has recovered sharply in CSE 2025 and it is good 10 marks more than the CSE 2023 cut-off.

Final Result Cut-off :

CSE 2023—953 marks

CSE 2024—947 marks

CSE 2025—963 marks

When I say that your Main Examination performance determines your final result as high marks scored in Main (Written) provides a cushion and if you are able to perform up to Interview Board members' expectations, your high interview marks would make a solid case for your name in the final merit-list even with high rank.

More or less steady final cut-off has a clear message – you have a tough competition and the creative and innovative nature of UPSC has made it genuinely tough.

This brings up the significance of each stage and how one should look at each stage – Prelims, Mains and Interview–when you prepare for UPSC-CSE.

You need to understand Prelims is only a screening test, but the competition is stiff and any surprise element in the Prelims papers make it more unpredictable.

Accept it or remain in denial mode – Prelims is a test of survival and you have to prepare for it in a way that it entails. And it is not just GS Paper I; this survival instinct has to be alive even in GS Paper II.

If your preparation is reasonably good and you are able to survive two hours each in GS Paper I and II, chances are you deliver a performance that keeps your head above the cut-off.

But once you crack Prelims, things become relatively organized with planned study and a consistent performance will certainly help you sail through and will deliver desired results.

If you are preparing for UPSC-CSE 2026, it is time to get inspired by these successful candidates and remain motivated.

Prelims 2026, still a few weeks away gives you a chance to reorganize your things and make the optimal use of the resources at your disposal. Work as per your plans and give it all you have.

Your success in Prelims will keep your hopes alive for next level Main Examination and for the final result.

So, keep preparing, keep advancing, every day counts !

My best wishes are with you !

P.Darpan

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GIST OF ESSENTIAL MAGAZINES

Questions from Yojana Magazine

Q. 1. Discuss the significance of the integrated planning approach and multimodal connectivity in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat. **(250 words)**

Ans. The Union Budget 2026-27 positions infrastructure as the primary engine for India's economic transformation, aiming for a USD 5 trillion economy by 2027-28 and a Viksit Bharat by 2047, with a massive capital expenditure (Capex) outlay of ₹ 12.21 trillion.

The Significance of Integrated Planning and Multimodal Connectivity

- **The Multiplier Effect :** Public Expenditure on infrastructure estimated to generate GDP gains of ₹ 2.6 to ₹ 3.6 for every rupee spent over the medium term.
- **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan :** This initiative unifies planning across 58 Central Ministries and 36 States/UTs on a GIS-based platform. It aims to reduce logistics costs from 13-14% of the GDP to approximately 8% by 2030.
- **Strategic Transport Corridors :** The budget proposes seven high-speed rail corridors (*e.g.*, Mumbai-Pune, Hyderabad-Bengaluru) and the operationalisation of 20 new national waterways to facilitate faster movement of people and freight.
- **Urban-Rural Integration :** By mapping City Economic Regions (CER) and focussing on last-mile connectivity in rural areas, infrastructure becomes an instrument for poverty alleviation and regional balanced growth.
- **Energy and Digital Synergy :** Large-scale investments in Green Hydrogen hubs and the electrification of railways (over 45,000 Rkm since 2014) ensure that growth is sustainable and digitally enabled.

Conclusion : By creating foundational assets and reducing structural inefficiencies, these measures aim to foster sustained, inclusive growth that builds private sector confidence and ensures India's global competitiveness.

Q. 2. Examine the shift from women s development to women-led development as reflected in the Union Budget 2026-27.

(150 words)

Ans. The Union Budget 2026-27 marks a paradigm shift by moving women's economic empowerment from the margins of social policy to the very center of the national economic strategy, by focussing on leadership, entrepreneurship and increased labour force participation.

Empowerment in Rural and Creative Economies

- **Rural Livelihoods :** The Budget introduces Self-Help Entrepreneur (SHE) Marts community-owned retail hubs in every district to provide market access for products made by 90.9 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- **Agricultural Support :** Funding for the Krishonnati Yojana has been significantly increased to support Mahila Kisans , alongside efforts to strengthen women-led organisations in the fisheries and coastal economies.
- **The Orange Economy :** The launch of the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) and AVGC labs in 15,000 schools seeks to democratise creative tools, allowing women and youth in small towns to lead in digital content creation.
- **Safety and STEM :** To ensure retention in higher education, the Budget proposes girls hostels in every district for STEM institutions, supported by the Mission Shakti framework for safety and security.

Questions from Kurukshetra Magazine

Q. 3. In light of the Union Budget 2026-27, discuss the measures intended to enhance agricultural productivity for small-holder farmers.

(250 words)

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Ans. The Union Budget 2026-27 marks a decisive shift in India's agricultural strategy, moving away from short-term income cushioning toward long-term productivity and resilience. This transition from 'calorie sufficiency' and and 'food security to 'prosperity security' recognises that 86% of Indian farmers are smallholders who require a technology-enabled frontier to overcome challenges like climate volatility and fragmented markets.

Measures to Enhance Agricultural Productivity

- **Structural Regulatory Reforms (Seed Act 2026) :** To protect farmers from substandard inputs, this Act introduces a nationwide seed traceability system using QR codes. By mandating registration for all commercial sellers and imposing fines up to ₹ 30 lakh, it ensures transparency and rebuilds trust in the seed supply chain.
- **Digital Integration (Bharat-VISTAAR) :** This AI-driven platform fuses Agri Stack and ICAR knowledge systems to provide localised, real-time guidance on weather, soil health and pest management, aiming to reduce transaction costs by 10-12% and improve price realisation by 5-8%.
- **Targeted Capital Investment :** Economic modeling suggests that a 7% rise in capital investment can generate nearly 1·9% additional output growth. The budget reflects this by prioritising capital formation in schemes like PMKSY, aiming to raise annual crop yield growth from the current 2-2·5% to 3–3·5% by 2028.
- **Resource Efficiency and Climate Resilience :** Expansion under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) aims to increase water-use efficiency by 30-40% and yields by 15-20% in irrigated areas. Furthermore, a six-year mission has been launched to develop climate-resilient seed varieties for essential pulses like pigeon pea and black gram.
- **Diversification into Allied Sectors :** The budget provides a 26·7% increase in allocations for livestock, dairying, and fisheries. Integrated development of 500 reservoirs for aquaculture help provide the stable, daily cash flow for farmers.

Conclusion : By combining Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) with structural reforms and robust capital investment, the government aims to ensure that rural prosperity is not built on 'one season', but through resilient farms and diversified incomes, empower the smallholder farmer as an active knowledge producer.

Q. 4. Building a stronger and more inclusive healthcare system in India requires a shift from incremental welfare to comprehensive health system strengthening. Discuss the measures proposed in the Union Budget 2026-27 in this context. (150 words)

Ans. The Union Budget 2026-27 represents a decisive pivot from peripheral social spending to treating healthcare as a central pillar of India's economic growth. It prioritizes long-term resilience, innovation and inclusivity to ensure that development reaches every citizen.

Key Initiatives for Strengthening Healthcare

- **Infrastructure Resilience :** The PM-ABHIM received a 71·9% increase (₹ 4,200 crore) to fortify critical care blocks and district laboratories. The National Health Mission (₹ 39,390 crore) continues to strengthen primary healthcare across states.
- **Human Capital :** A new phased plan aims to train 1,00,000 additional Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) to address workforce gaps. Funding for medical education also increased to ₹ 1,725 crore to expand MBBS and postgraduate seats.
- **Inclusivity and Nutrition :** Special emphasis is placed on women and child health through RMNCAH+N and support for PVTGs under PM-JANMAN. Significant allocations for Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2·0 (₹ 23,100 crore) integrate nutrition into the health framework.
- **Technological Self-Reliance :** The Bio-Pharma SHAKTI initiative (₹ 10,000 crore) targets domestic production of high-value biologics to reduce import dependence.

Conclusion : By linking infrastructure, human resources, and nutrition, the budget creates a resilient and participatory healthcare architecture essential for a healthier Viksit Bharat. Acknowledging health as a foundation for the future, these measures aim for 100% coverage and citizen-centric delivery.

Questions from Down to Earth Magazine

(16-28 February)

Q. 5. The Supreme Court of India's recognition of menstrual hygiene as a fundamental right marks a significant shift from a welfare-based approach to a rights-based framework. Discuss the implications of this judgement on gender equality and the challenges in its effective implementation. (250 words)

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Ans. The Supreme Court recently recognised menstrual hygiene as a fundamental right under Article 21 (Right to Life and Dignity), asserting that bodily autonomy can only be exercised when girls have access to functional toilets and adequate products.

Implications for Gender Equality

- The ruling transforms menstrual health from a matter of budgetary discretion into an enforceable constitutional entitlement.
- By treating menstruation as a structural barrier, the judgement aligns sanitation and dignity with the Right to Education (Article 21A), aiming to reduce school dropouts among adolescent girls.
- The mandate to integrate gender-responsive curricula and sensitise male teachers and students shifts the responsibility from the individual girl to the institution, helping to replace social shame with informed discourse.

Implementation Challenges and Way Out

- NFHS-5 data show that over one in five girls still lack access to safe practices. Many existing toilets remain non-functional or lack water, limiting the elimination of 'period poverty'. The failure of 18 States and UTs to report on earlier menstrual management policies reflects a low priority in governance.
- Success requires a multi-sectoral response across four pillars : health, education, environment, and gender. This involves reviving dysfunctional systems, ensuring ring-fenced budgets and empowering local bodies like Panchayati Raj institutions for monitoring.

Q. 6. The 16th Finance Commission (FC) recommendations reflect a paradigm shift in balancing fiscal performance with environmental priorities. Analyse the key changes introduced in the devolution criteria and disaster management framework. (150 words)

Ans. The 16th Finance Commission maintains states' vertical devolution at 41% but introduces critical changes to horizontal distribution. For the first time, state contribution to national GDP is added as a criterion (10%), rewarding economic performance.

Environmental and Governance Shifts

- **Ecological Incentives :** The definition of forest expanded cover to include 'Open Forests' (10-40% canopy density), incentivising the protection of grasslands and savannahs.
- **Disaster Recognition :** Heatwaves and lightning are recommended for recognition as national disasters. Furthermore, forest fires are now explicitly included in the Disaster Risk Index used for fund allocation.
- **Local Body Empowerment :** Grants to rural local bodies saw a massive 84% increase, with 20% of funds now tied to their ability to generate independent revenue.

These reforms aim to align India's fiscal architecture with emerging climatic realities and economic contributions.

(1–15 March)

Q. 7. Discuss the health risks associated with uranium-contaminated groundwater and suggest mitigation strategies. (250 words)

Ans. Uranium-238 a naturally occurring radioactive element, poses both chemical and radiological risks when present beyond permissible limits in drinking water.

1. Health Risks Associated with Uranium-238 Contamination : Uranium primarily affects the kidneys. Long-term exposure can lead to chronic kidney disease and renal dysfunction. Uranium-238 emits alpha radiation, harmful when ingested. Increases risk of cancers, particularly bone and liver cancer. Uranium can accumulate in bones, replacing calcium. Leads to long-term internal exposure and skeletal damage. Children, pregnant women and immunocompromised individuals face higher risks.

2. Causes of Contamination : Natural leaching from uranium-rich rocks into aquifers. Excessive groundwater extraction, use of phosphate fertilizers, poor irrigation and water management practices.

3. Mitigation Strategies : Regular testing and mapping of groundwater quality, regulating groundwater use. Supply of treated surface water and safe drinking water. Use of reverse osmosis and ion-exchange systems in water treatment. Educating people about risks and safe water practices.

Q. 8. Critically examine the implications of India's growing focus on data centre infrastructure as a strategy for AI development. (150 words)

Ans. : Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a key driver of economic and strategic power.

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While India aspires to be a global AI leader, its ecosystem is constrained by limited innovation and a shortage of advanced AI skills.

1. Challenges in India's AI Ecosystem :

- **Low Innovation Capacity :** Limited high-quality research output and patents in AI. Weak industry-academia collaboration.
- **Skill Deficit :** Shortage of highly trained AI researchers and engineers. Skewed focus on IT services over deep-tech development.
- **Dependence on Imports :** Reliance on foreign technologies, platforms and chips.

2. Focus on Data Centres – Opportunities and Concerns :

- **Potential Benefits :** Strengthens digital infrastructure and data storage capacity. Supports cloud computing and data localization needs. Attracts investments and generates employment.
- **Critical Concerns :** *Limited Value Addition* : Data centres are capital-intensive but low in innovation output. *Energy and Environmental Costs* : High electricity and water consumption. *Misaligned Priorities* : Infrastructure alone cannot substitute for R&D and talent development. *Risk of 'Digital Colonialism'* : Hosting data without owning AI technologies limits strategic autonomy.

3. Way Forward :

- Invest in AI research, innovation hubs and startups, strengthen higher education and specialized AI training, promote semiconductor and compute ecosystem and encourage public-private partnerships in deeptech.

Questions from Science Reporter Magazine

Q.9. Global environmental observances such as World Wildlife Day, International Day of Forests and International Day of Zero Waste highlight interconnected ecological challenges. Examine their significance in promoting sustainable development. **(150 words)**

Ans. Global environmental observances reinforce the need for an integrated approach to conservation and sustainable living, crucial for achieving long-term environmental sustainability.

- **Biodiversity Conservation :** World Wildlife Day emphasizes protection of flora and fauna, essential for ecological balance.
- **Forest Ecosystems :** International Day of Forests highlights forests as carbon sinks, biodiversity hubs and livelihood sources.
- **Sustainable Consumption :** International Day of Zero Waste promotes circular economy and waste reduction.
- **Interlinkages :** Deforestation and waste generation threaten wildlife habitats, while unsustainable consumption drives ecological degradation.

Q. 10. Discuss the role of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) in ensuring health security, conserving biodiversity and supporting livelihoods. **(250 words)**

Ans. Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) constitute a vital component of global biological resources, with 50,000–70,000 species used worldwide.

1. Role in Health Security : Backbone of traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda and Unani. According to World Health Organization, 70–95% population in developing countries depends on traditional medicine. Provides affordable and accessible healthcare alternatives.

2. Role in Biodiversity Conservation : MAPs contribute to ecological balance and genetic diversity. Around 1,300 species are listed under Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Encourages conservation through sustainable use and awareness.

3. Role in Livelihoods : Source of income for rural and tribal communities. One in five people globally depend on these resources. Supports small-scale industries, herbal markets and exports.

4. Challenges : Overexploitation and unsustainable harvesting. Habitat loss and climate change impacts. Illegal trade and lack of regulation. Poor standardization and limited research.

5. Measures for Sustainable Utilization : Promote cultivation and reduce pressure on wild species. Strengthen legal frameworks and enforcement. Community participation in conservation. Develop value chains and certification systems. Increase research and awareness.

Conclusion : MAPs are crucial for achieving a balance between health security, environmental sustainability, and economic development. A holistic and sustainable approach, combining conservation with livelihood support, is essential to harness their full potential.

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Nuclear Disarmament Article

New START's End and the Future of Nuclear Stability in the Indo-Pacific

—Achal Priyadarshy

The expiration of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty on 5 February, 2026 marks a critical turning point in the global nuclear order. Since its entry into force on February 5, 2011, the treaty served as the final legally binding framework limiting the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Russia, the two largest nuclear-armed states. By establishing numerical limits, verification procedures and institutionalised transparency, the agreement helped sustain strategic stability even during periods of geopolitical tension.

With the treaty's expiration, the international system enters a new phase in which no formal constraints regulate the size, deployment, or verification of the strategic arsenals of the two largest nuclear-armed states. This development has profound implications not only for global nuclear governance but also for the emerging nuclear dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region. The collapse of bilateral arms control occurs at a time when nuclear competition is becoming increasingly multipolar. Consequently, the end of New START may reshape the strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific, affecting deterrence capability, alliance politics and the broader non-proliferation regime.

Significance of the New START in the Global Nuclear Order

The New START treaty represented the culmination of decades of arms control efforts between Washington and Moscow that began during the Cold War era. Earlier agreements such as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks primarily focussed on limiting launch platforms rather than reducing the number of deployed warheads or establishing detailed verification mechanisms.

In contrast, New START introduced a comprehensive system of limits and transparency measures. The treaty capped each country's deployed strategic nuclear warheads at 1,550 and limited the number of delivery systems, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and heavy bombers. These restrictions were accompanied by a robust verification regime that included on-site inspections, data exchanges and a continuous notification system.

The strategic consequences of the expiration of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) in 2026 is the erosion of US–Russia arms control, the emergence of a multipolar nuclear order, which also has implication on nuclear stability, deterrence dynamics and security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region.

The treaty's most important contribution was therefore not merely numerical reduction but predictability and trust-building. Regular inspections and detailed data exchanges enabled both countries to distinguish between routine military activities and potential preparations for escalation. This transparency significantly reduced the likelihood of misinterpretation or worst-case strategic planning.

However, the operational effectiveness of the treaty began to erode when Russia suspended its participation in its verification mechanisms in 2023. With the termination of data exchanges and inspections, the treaty's stabilising value diminished even before its formal expiration. The end of New START therefore represents the culmination of a gradual decline in the institutional architecture of nuclear arms control.

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Immediate Consequences of the Treaty's Expiration

1. Loss of Transparency and Verification : The most immediate consequence of the treaty's end is the disappearance of the institutionalised transparency that previously structured the US-Russian nuclear relationship. Without inspections and data exchanges, both states must rely more heavily on intelligence assessments and national technical means such as satellite surveillance.

While these tools remain sophisticated, they cannot fully replace treaty-based verification. Intelligence assessments often contain uncertainties and may encourage policymakers to assume worst-case scenarios regarding an adversary's capabilities. In a context of geopolitical rivalry, such pessimistic assessments can lead to security dilemmas, where defensive measures by one state are interpreted as offensive preparations by another.

2. Renewed Potential for Nuclear Arms Racing : Historically, arms control treaties acted as guardrails preventing rapid escalation in nuclear competition. Without these constraints, strategic planners may advocate expanding arsenals to hedge against potential adversary capabilities. This dynamic could gradually reverse the post-Cold War trend of nuclear reductions. Both the United States and Russia retain the technical capability to rapidly increase the number of deployed warheads by 'uploading' additional nuclear weapons onto existing missile systems. Although neither state has yet announced a large-scale expansion, the absence of legal limits

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lowers the political and strategic barriers to such actions.

3. Weakening of the Global Non-Proliferation Regime : The expiration of New START also undermines the normative foundations of the global non-proliferation architecture, particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons. Under the NPT, non-nuclear-weapon states agreed not to develop nuclear weapons in exchange for access to peaceful nuclear technology and a commitment by nuclear-armed states to pursue disarmament. When the major nuclear powers fail to maintain meaningful arms control commitments, the credibility of this bargain weakens. For technologically capable 'threshold states', the disappearance of visible nuclear restraint among great powers may strengthen arguments for pursuing independent deterrent capabilities. Thus, the end of New START risks eroding the political legitimacy of the global non-proliferation regime.

Implications for Nuclear Stability in the Indo-Pacific

The end of New START has particularly important implications for the strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific region.

1. Intensification of Strategic Competition : The Indo-Pacific is already experiencing heightened strategic competition involving the United States, China and regional powers. The absence of US-Russian arms control reduces predictability in the global nuclear order and may indirectly encourage greater emphasis on nuclear deterrence in Asia.

For example, China's nuclear expansion may increasingly be interpreted by the United States as part of a broader strategic competition. In response, Washington may strengthen its regional deterrence posture, including the deployment of advanced missile systems and expanded nuclear planning with allies. Such dynamics could create a security spiral, in which each side's efforts to enhance deterrence lead to further countermeasures by rivals.

2. Pressure on Regional Allies and Extended Deterrence : Several Indo-Pacific states such as Japan, South Korea and Australia depend on American security guarantees to deter potential nuclear threats.

- However, the erosion of arms control may generate uncertainty about the long-term stability of these arrangements. If nuclear competition intensifies among major powers, allied states may face difficult strategic choices regarding defence planning, alliance commitments and nuclear policy.
- Some analysts have already observed growing debates in certain countries about the possibility of indigenous nuclear capabilities, particularly in response to regional security concerns. Although such developments remain politically sensitive, the weakening of global arms control could gradually reshape these discussions.

3. Increased Risk of Crisis Instability : Arms control agreements historically served as communication channels between rival powers. Even during periods of intense political hostility, these mechanisms allowed for information exchange and crisis management. Without such institutionalised communication, misunderstandings and misperceptions may become more likely during geopolitical crises. In the Indo-Pacific—where maritime disputes, military exercises and strategic signalling are common—reduced transparency among nuclear powers could increase the risk of escalation.

Strategic Implications for Regional Security Policy

- In response to these evolving dynamics, Indo-Pacific states are increasingly emphasising deterrence by denial rather than relying exclusively on nuclear umbrellas. This approach focusses on strengthening conventional military capabilities to prevent adversaries from achieving rapid strategic gains.
- For example, several countries are investing in long-range precision strike systems, advanced surveillance technologies and integrated air and missile defence networks. Such capabilities raise the cost of aggression and provide policy-makers with a broader range of response options in crisis situations.
- By strengthening conventional deterrence, states can complement nuclear deterrence and reduce the risk that regional conflicts escalate directly to the nuclear level. In this sense, defence modernisation in the Indo-Pacific reflects an attempt to adapt to the uncertainties created by the decline of traditional arms control frameworks.

Prospects for Future Nuclear Governance

Despite the pessimistic outlook, the end of New START does not necessarily imply the complete collapse of nuclear restraint. Several alternative approaches to nuclear governance may still contribute to stability.

- **Informal Transparency Measures :** Even without legally binding treaties, nuclear-armed could maintain voluntary information-sharing mechanisms. Regular exchanges of data on stockpiles, missile tests and major modernisation programmes could reduce uncertainty and mitigate worst-case assumptions.
- **Crisis Communication Mechanisms :** Strengthening crisis-communication channels between major powers remains essential. Hotlines, advance notification systems and military-to-military dialogues can reduce the risk of accidental escalation during periods of tension.
- **Multilateral Risk-Reduction Initiatives :** Given the multipolar nature of the contemporary nuclear order, future arms control efforts may need to move beyond traditional bilateral frameworks. Multilateral dialogues involving the United States, Russia, China and other nuclear-armed states could focus on risk reduction rather than strict numerical limits.

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Space Article

India's Space Imperative : Safe-guarding National Interests in an Era of Orbital Militarization

—Neelam Kejriwal

Introduction

Outer Space has seen a significant shift from being a space for scientific exploration to strategic competition between nations. Satellites play a huge role in modern governance by building national security. Indian is also not far behind in this race along with other super powers like US, China, Russia. As the outer space infrastructure grows, the need to protect and secure it also arises and for that we need to start with understanding following two terms :

Militarization *Vs.* Weaponization

With respect to space technology, militarization is the use of space assets for military purposes while placing or using weapon amongst spacecrafts refers to weaponization. Both goes hand in hand. Militarization emphasizes on progress and growth in this field where as weaponsation gives an upper hand to an out space threat.

Importance of Space for India

India has seen a rapid growth in terms of space infrastructure like telecom, broadcasting, weather forecasting, navigation, secure military communication, modern military operations.

With ambitious missions like Space Vision 2047, India aims at establishing Indian space station by 2035 and sending Indian Astronauts to Moon by 2040. This will also result in growth of space infrastructure along with economic development.

Orbital Militarization by Global Powers

Global powers like US, Russia and China are focussing on developing anti satellites missiles which can threaten the space activity of another nation. However, this will also create orbital debris which can cause damage to the spacecrafts. Application of Artificial Intelligence in spacecrafts enhances detection capabilities, which can be used for defensive purposes as well.

India has been a part of this race too with successful testing of it's first Anti-Satellite Weapon (ASAT) under the operation, Mission Shakti. In 2018, Defence Space Agency was created to coordinate military space related activities. Mission Defspace, launched in 2022, includes various challenges to public and private sectors in the areas of launch systems, satellites, communication systems, ground systems and software systems. The mission aims to encourage domestic industry to be active in the sphere of defence.

Legal Landscape

There are different international treaties which governs the space activities :

(a) The Outer Space Treaty, 1967 : This Agreement entered into force in 1967. India signed the agreement in 1967 and was ratified in 1982. It provides that outer space must be used for peaceful purposes. All countries have equal rights to explore space and nations cannot claim sovereignty over outer space. The space activities conducted by state or private person is the responsibility of the respective state.

(b) Rescue Agreement, 1968 : The Rescue Agreement was adopted in 1967 and entered into force in 1968. This agreement emphasizes on rescuing astronauts facing accidents or emergency situations. The state is obligated to take all necessary steps to rescue and ensure safety of astronauts and return them to launching state. This agreement was another step towards strengthening international cooperation in space mission.

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(c) Liability Convention, 1972 : This Convention was adopted to resolve the liability for damages caused by space activities. It provided clear rules for the liabilities. It provided for absolute liability of launching state in case of damage caused on earth's surface or on aircraft in flight. It also provides for fault based liability if the damage occurred in outer space. The compensations will be claimed through diplomatic channels.

(d) Registration Convention, 1975 : This Convention resolves the problem of ownership of state's objects. It creates an international registry for state's object maintaining a record of objects launched by states. Along with this, each country is suppose to have a national registry as well.

(e) Moon Agreement, 1979 : Indian has not ratified Moon Agreement. This agreement focusses on natural resource exploitation on Moon and other celestial bodies. All these resources are free from ownership claim by any nation. It is open to everyone for peaceful purposes.

These treaties are significant for India to promote peace and international cooperation towards outer space. With India's ambitious space activities expansion plans, these treaties become important. India has adopted a diplomatic approach in outer space matters emphasizing upon cooperation, prevention of weaponization of space and sustainable use of space resources.

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Government Policies Article

Homebuyers at Crossroads : Has RERA Delivered on its Promise ?

—Anuj Kumar

For decades, the Indian real estate sector was plagued by structural problems such as delayed possession, diversion of funds by developers, opaque pricing mechanisms and limited consumer protection. Homebuyers often invested their life savings in under-construction projects only to face indefinite delays, legal disputes, or outright fraud.

Before the enactment of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (RERA), the regulatory landscape was fragmented. Consumer protection primarily relied on : Consumer Protection Act forums, Civil courts and Contractual litigation

These mechanisms were time-consuming and inefficient. Homebuyers lacked bargaining power against powerful developers. Recognizing the need for systemic reform, the Government of India introduced RERA to bring transparency, accountability, and consumer protection to the real estate sector.

Today, nearly a decade after its implementation, an important question emerges : Has RERA fulfilled its promise for homebuyers ?

Objectives of RERA

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 was enacted to bring transparency, accountability and efficiency to the real estate sector while safeguarding the interests of homebuyers.

1. Protection of Homebuyers : The law aims to protect consumers from fraudulent practices, project delays and unfair agreements imposed by developers. It provides a legal mechanism through which homebuyers can file complaints and seek timely redressal.

2. Promotion of Transparency : Developers are required to disclose complete project details on the RERA portal. Important information includes land ownership title, construction progress, approved layout plans, completion timelines and financial disclosures. This ensures buyers can make informed decisions before investing.

3. Ensuring Timely Completion of Projects : Developers must adhere to the project timelines declared during registration. Failure to complete projects within the specified time may result in penalties, compensation to buyers, or other legal actions.

4. Regulation of Real Estate Agents : All real estate agents must register under RERA before operating in the market. This provision aims to regulate intermediaries and reduce misleading property transactions.

Establishment of Regulatory Authorities : The Act mandates every state and union territory to establish a Real Estate Regulatory Authority and an Appellate Tribunal to regulate the sector and resolve disputes efficiently.

Institutional Architecture of RERA

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 introduced a structured regulatory framework to ensure transparency, accountability and efficient dispute resolution in the real estate sector.

1. Real Estate Regulatory Authority : Each State and Union Territory is required to establish a Real Estate Regulatory Authority to regulate and supervise real estate activities. The authority is responsible for registering real estate projects and agents. It monitors compliance with legal provisions and ensures that developers follow approved plans and timelines. The authority also addresses complaints and grievances raised by homebuyers.

2. Real Estate Appellate Tribunal : An Appellate Tribunal has been established to hear appeals against decisions made by the RERA authority. It provides a faster legal remedy for disputes between developers, agents and buyers.

3. Mandatory Project Registration : Real estate projects above a specified size must be registered with RERA before marketing or selling units to buyers.

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Key Provisions of the RERA Act

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, introduced several important provisions to regulate the real estate sector and protect the interests of homebuyers.

1. Escrow Account Requirement : Developers must deposit 70% of the funds collected from buyers into a separate escrow account. This ensures that the money is used only for the construction and development of the same project.

2. Standardization of Carpet Area : The Act standardized the definition of carpet area to prevent misleading advertisements and hidden charges by developers.

3. Interest and Compensation : If a developer delays project completion, homebuyers are entitled to compensation or a refund with interest.

4. Mandatory Disclosures Developers must regularly update project details, approvals and construction progress on the official RERA portal.

5. Penalties : Violations may result in heavy fines, project cancellation, or even imprisonment of developers.

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Progress Since Implementation

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 has significantly improved transparency and accountability in India's real estate sector since its implementation.

1. Nationwide Adoption : By 2024, most States and Union Territories had established the Real Estate Regulatory Authority to regulate real estate activities. Around 32 States and UTs have operational RERA authorities, demonstrating nation-wide adoption.

2. Large-Scale Project Registration : A large number of real estate projects and agents have been brought under the regulatory framework. By January 2025, over 1·38 lakh real estate projects and nearly 95,987 real estate agents had been registered under RERA.

3. Dispute Resolution : RERA authorities have resolved a significant number of consumer grievances. More than 1·25 lakh complaints filed by homebuyers have been addressed across the country, strengthening consumer confidence in the real estate sector.

Impact of RERA on Homebuyers

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 has significantly improved the position of homebuyers by enhancing transparency, strengthening legal protection and increasing accountability in the real estate sector.

1. Increased Transparency : RERA has made it mandatory for developers to disclose detailed information about their projects on official portals of the RERA. Buyers can now easily access important details such as the project registration number, completion timeline, layout approvals and the developer's past record. This transparency helps buyers make informed investment decisions and reduces the information gap between developers and consumers.

2. Faster Dispute Resolution : The Act established a specialized mechanism for resolving complaints within 60 days related to real estate transactions, providing a quicker alternative to lengthy civil court procedures. Although, the actual duration may vary, the process is generally faster and more structured than traditional litigation.

3. Legal Empowerment of Buyers : Homebuyers now have clear legal rights and remedies against developers in cases of project delays or violations. Buyers can claim refunds, seek compensation for delays and demand interest payments for financial losses. In several cases, tribunals have ordered developers to compensate buyers for significant delays in project delivery.

4. Boost to Investor Confidence : By increasing accountability and transparency, RERA has improved trust in the real estate market. As a result, domestic and international investors have shown greater interest, leading to increased private equity investment in the sector.

Regional Success Stories

The implementation of RERA 2016 has produced notable success in several states, demonstrating the effectiveness of the regulatory framework.

1. Maharashtra : A Leading Example : Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority (MahaRERA) is widely regarded as one of the most efficient state regulators. The authority has registered over 50,000 real estate projects ensuring greater transparency and accountability. It resolves thousands of disputes every year through an efficient grievance redressal system. In 2025, MahaRERA resolved 6,945 complaints, marking an 81% increase compared to the previous year.

2. Uttar Pradesh : Efficient Complaint Disposal : Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (UP RERA) has also demonstrated strong performance in resolving consumer complaints. The authority received 58,545 complaints and successfully resolved 50,812 cases, achieving an 85·2% disposal rate. This high resolution rate has significantly strengthened consumer confidence in the housing market.

Persistent Challenges for Homebuyers

Despite the progress made under the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, several structural and administrative challenges continue to affect its effectiveness in protecting homebuyers.

1. Enforcement Gaps : Many state RERA authorities face limitations in enforcing their orders. Even when rulings are issued in favour of buyers, developers sometimes delay compliance. Courts have observed that weak enforcement mechanisms reduce the effectiveness of regulatory decisions.

2. Backlog of Cases : Although, RERA aims to resolve disputes within 60 days, many states still face delays due to increasing complaints. For instance, the Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority has handled thousands of cases but still reports a significant backlog of pending complaints.

3. Continued Project Delays : Despite strict project timelines mandated by the Act, delays in construction and project completion remain common. Experts note that simple project registration under RERA does not automatically ensure timely delivery of housing projects.

4. Regulatory Fragmentation : Since RERA is implemented at the state level, the quality of regulation varies across states. Some states have developed strong institutional systems, while others face problems such as staffing shortages, administrative delays and limited resources.

5. Conflict with Insolvency Laws : Real estate insolvency cases often create legal conflicts between RERA and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. Although, homebuyers are recognized as financial creditors under IBC, coordination between these legal frameworks remains complex and sometimes delays resolution.

Recently, the Supreme Court of India ruled that developers cannot compel buyers to take possession of apartments without obtaining a valid Occupancy Certificate (OC). This judgement strengthened consumer protection and ensured that developers comply with legal construction and safety requirements before handing over properties. Indian courts have repeatedly affirmed that homebuyers are entitled to interest and compensation if developers

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delay project completion. These rulings reinforce accountability among developers and provide stronger legal protection to property buyers facing project delays.

Government Initiatives Complementing RERA

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 works in coordination with several government housing and urban development policies to improve transparency and promote affordable housing.

1. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) : The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Urban aims to provide affordable housing to urban households. Under this scheme, over 89 lakh houses have been completed, helping millions of families access formal housing. RERA complements this initiative by ensuring that housing projects follow transparent regulations and are delivered on time.

2. Digital RERA Portal : The government has introduced a unified digital RERA portal to improve transparency in the real estate sector. This portal allows buyers to access project details, verify registration numbers and track complaints. It strengthens consumer awareness and improves monitoring of project progress.

Way Forward

To improve the effectiveness of RERA, several policy measures are necessary.

1. Strengthening Enforcement Powers : RERA authorities should be granted stronger powers to enforce their decisions and impose strict penalties on non-compliant developers.

2. Institutional Capacity Building : Regulatory authorities require adequate staffing, legal expertise and advanced technological infrastructure to function effectively.

3. Coordination with Insolvency Framework : Greater coordination is required between RERA and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 to resolve stalled real estate projects quickly.

4. Greater Consumer Awareness : Homebuyers should verify RERA registration and project details before investing in any property.

Conclusion

Nearly a decade since its enactment, the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 has brought greater transparency, accountability and consumer protection to the Indian real estate sector. By strengthening homebuyers' rights and creating regulatory institutions like the Real Estate Regulatory Authority, it has improved project oversight and dispute resolution.

However, enforcement gaps, state-level disparities, and project delays remain. Strengthening institutional capacity, ensuring developer compliance, and better coordination are essential for RERA to fully achieve its objectives and build a reliable, consumer-friendly market.

Practice Question for Prelims :

Q. Which ministry administers the RERA framework at the central level ?

(A) Ministry of Finance

(B) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

(C) Ministry of Law and Justice

(D) Ministry of Commerce

Ans. (B)

Practice Question for Mains

Q. Analyze the role of RERA in enhancing transparency and investment in India's real estate sector. **(250 words)**

P.Darpan

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Emerging Challenges

The path to explore outer space for India is full of challenges like :

(a) Attacks by small debris or any form of targeted attacks can hamper the space object.

(b) With increase in destructions of satellites, risk of Kessler Syndrome or debris field creation increases.

(c) Technological advancement resulting in cyber attacks, etc. which threatens the security of state.

(d) Lack of domestic laws to govern space related activities.

However, India is still working towards developing technology and comprehensive network for monitoring and protecting space objects.

Conclusion

In the modern world, with the growth of technology, outer space has become indispensable to the development and growth of a nation. This made space a valuable asset which witnessed a shift from exploration to strategic asset which is protected and destroyed to threaten other nations. Along with developing national infrastructure to be a part of global space race country, India is also required to be aligned as per international obligations to protect itself in different situations and resolve the issues amicably. The strategy adopted by India should be align don all fronts including technology, legal framework and international diplomacy. With international cooperation and sustainable growth, India can balance it's interest and become outer space explorer and contribute towards sustainability of global space order.

Practice Questions for Prelims :

Q.1. Which of the following international treaties governs the rescue and return of astronauts in distress ?

(A) Liability Convention, 1972

(B) Registration Convention, 1975

(C) Rescue Agreement, 1968

(D) Moon Agreement, 1979

Ans. (C)

Q.2. Under the Liability Convention (1972), the launching state has absolute liability for damage caused :

1. On the Earth's surface
2. To aircraft in flight
3. To satellites in outer space

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

(A) Only 1 and 2

(B) Only 2 and 3

(C) Only 1 and 3

(D) All 1, 2 and 3

Ans. (A)

Practice Question for Mains

Q. Outer space has become a strategic domain of geopolitical competition. Discuss the implications of orbital militarization for India's national security. **(250 words)**

P.Darpan

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Sustainable Development Article

Net Zero Scenarios : Integrating India's Development Priorities with Climate Commitments

—Ritu Chaturvedi

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Recently, NITI Aayog released a comprehensive set of 11 reports titled 'Scenarios Towards Viksit Bharat and Net Zero', prepared by ten Inter-Ministerial Working Groups. The reports attempt an integrated answer to a difficult national question : *How can India become a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047 (Viksit Bharat) while staying on track for Net Zero GHG emissions by 2070 ?* The value of the exercise lies not in one headline figure, but in how it links growth, energy, jobs, cities, finance, minerals, land and water into a single transition narrative.

The Big Idea

India's Net Zero pathway is not being framed as 'growth versus climate'. It is being framed as growth redesigned, where the energy system, industrial base, and urban infrastructure evolve in a way that keeps development priorities intact while steadily reducing emissions. NITI Aayog calls this an unprecedented experiment of scale : no major economy has tried to multiply GDP nearly eightfold within one generation while simultaneously transforming its energy system to Net Zero.

At the heart of the pathway is a simple logic: India's economy will grow rapidly, energy demand will rise sharply and the only sustainable way to serve that demand is to electrify end-use sectors and clean up electricity generation, while managing the social and financial costs of the transition.

Macroeconomy and Society : From Consumption-led to Investment-Driven Growth

A major insight is the projected shift in India's growth structure. The economy is expected to move from a largely consumption-led pattern to a more investment-driven model. As infrastructure, manufacturing capacity and clean energy systems expand, the share of investment in GDP rises, while the share of private consumption declines somewhat over time. This is not a moral statement on consumption; it is a structural implication of building a new energy and industrial system at scale.

The reports project GDP rising from about USD 4·18 trillion (2025) to USD 30 trillion (2047). That growth creates policy space, but also increases the stakes : if today's infrastructure choices are inefficient, the country risks locking itself into high energy demand and higher emissions for decades.

Socially, the transition has two faces. On one hand, it opens up green employment; the energy sector alone is expected to add around 7 million jobs by 2050. On the other hand, it creates deep restructuring pressures in fossil-linked regions: over 150 districts dependent on coal and thermal power ecosystems will need support through skilling, social protection and local economic diversification. This is the core of Just Transition, ensuring the shift is not only fast but also fair.

Cities and Infrastructure : The 'Lock-in' Decade

The reports underline why India's urban and infrastructure choices are central to Net Zero. Urbanisation is projected to rise from about 37% (2023) to 51% (2047) and 65% (2070). Most importantly, nearly 86% of the building floor space required by 2070 is yet to be built. This is a warning and an opportunity at the same time.

Rising incomes will increase demand for comfort and mobility. AC penetration is projected to climb from about 10% today to 80% by 2070, and car ownership per 1,000 people may rise from 32 to 200–250. If India builds inefficient buildings and car-dependent cities now, it will 'lock in' high electricity and fuel demand, making future decarbonisation far more expensive.

That is why the report's logic pushes for Net Zero Ready buildings, strong energy codes, efficient cooling, and urban design that reduces travel demand. In mobility, the emphasis is not only on switching to EVs but on rethinking systems : mass transit, metro-rail integration, non-motorised transport, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and shifting freight to rail and waterways.

Net Zero Energy Transition : Electrification as the Core Strategy

The Net Zero scenario is built around a decisive rise in electrification. Electricity's share in final energy demand is expected to triple, moving from about 21% (2025) to 60% (2070). This shift is driven by EVs, induction cooking, and industrial electrification (including heat pumps).

This electrification works only if the power sector becomes predominantly clean. The scenario envisions :

- Solar and wind capacity rising from about 164 GW (2025) to over 6,000 GW (2070).
- Nuclear capacity scaling from about 8 GW to over 300 GW by 2070 as a provider of firm, baseload power.
- The share of fossil fuels in primary energy is dropping from 87% (2025) to 14% (2070).
- Residual fossil use is being paired with Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS).

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- The grid emission factor is trending to zero by 2070

This is a crucial framing : Net Zero is not achieved only by adding renewables, but by ensuring the grid is reliable, scalable and clean enough to support economy-wide electrify-cation.

Finance : The Biggest Cons-traint, not the Biggest Idea

If electrification is the strategy, finance is the constraint. The Net Zero scenario requires cumulative investment of around USD 22·7 trillion by 2070, roughly USD 500 billion per year, compared to current annual levels of about USD 135 billion. Even after domestic reforms, the reports indicate a financing gap of USD 6·5 trillion.

A key implication is the likely rise in reliance on the international capital. The share of international sources (like FDI and concessional finance) may need to increase from around 17% to about 42% by 2070. That creates opportunities, cheaper capital, larger pools of finance, but also risks: external shocks, currency pressures, and uneven access to global climate finance.

The report's policy direction is clear : India needs a stronger domestic climate finance ecosystem, through a National Green Finance Institution, a credible Climate Finance Taxonomy and platforms (including GIFT City) that can crowd in long-term foreign capital.

Critical Minerals : From Fuel Security to Mineral Security

A striking part of the scenario is how it reframes energy security. As fossil fuel dependence reduces, dependence on Critical Energy Transition Minerals (CETMs) rises. Under the Net Zero scenario, CETM demand is estimated to increase by 51% compared to current policies. Copper and graphite account for about two-thirds of this demand, while lithium, cobalt, and nickel remain areas of near-total import dependence for India. Most of the mineral demand is driven by : EV batteries (55%) and Solar tech-nologies (30%).

The strategic lesson is simple : the transition can accidentally replace one dependence with another unless India builds resilience through domestic exploration, refining capa-city, overseas asset acquisition (KABIL), and circularity (recycling, material efficiency). This is also where Extended Producer Responsi-bility (EPR) becomes important, not as a slogan, but as an industrial policy tool to reduce virgin mineral demand.

Land and Water : The Spatial Challenge

The transition is not only tech-nological; it is geographical. Large-scale renewables require land, often creating conflicts with agriculture and ecology. The reports also flag a serious water stress dimension : nearly 75% of renewable energy capacity is clustered in water-stressed states, raising concerns about the water–energy trade-off, especially for water-intensive tech-nologies like green hydrogen.

The recommended direction is integrated planning : agrivoltaics, floating solar, and repurposing degraded/mined lands, along with basin-aware approaches for water allocation and hydrogen siting. This is where climate policy meets natural resource governance.

Agriculture : The Hardest Balancing Act

Agriculture is presented as uniquely vulnerable because it is both a source of emissions and a frontline victim of climate change. The challenge is to mitigate emis-sions that are often dispersed and 'invisible' (like methane and nitrous oxide) without compromising food security and farmer livelihoods. This makes agriculture policy central to a just and stable Net Zero trajectory, where mitigation is paired with resilience, productivity and income protection.

What Holds India Back : The Core Challenges

The reports identify a cluster of constraints that could slow or distort the transition. Key technologies such as CCUS, long-duration energy storage and SMRs are described as nascent and unproven at scale in India. Financing remains large and uncertain. Mineral dependence creates new vulnerabilities. And the social transition is deep : coal districts and fossil-linked manufacturing face restructuring that must be managed carefully.

Equally important is the risk of building the wrong infrastructure today, especially inefficient buildings and car-centric cities, that would hardwire high energy demand into the economy.

What Strengthens the Path : The Policy Package

The reports recommend a broad policy response that treats Net Zero as a whole-of-economy transforma-tion :

- Mission LiFE to moderate demand through lifestyle and consumption choices (public transport, efficient cooling, mindful consumption).
- Stronger EPR and recycled-content standards to reduce virgin resource use.
- Urban mobility focussed on systems, rail, metro, NMT, TOD, and efficient freight modes, rather than only replacing ICE cars with EVs.
- Future-proofing buildings using strict codes, benchmarking, dis-closure and green procurement to mainstream Net Zero Ready construction.
- De-risking green industry through blended finance and public procurement for green hydrogen, CCUS and low-carbon cement.
- Resilient supply chains through exploration, refining, recycling, and KABIL-enabled overseas assets.
- Integrated land and water plan-ning using floating solar, agri-voltaics and basin-aware strategies.
- Just Transition funding through DMF, Skill India and better worker mapping via e-Shram.
- Treating adaptation as equal to mitigation with vulnerability mapping and climate-proof infrastructure.
- Building MRV systems and digital layers like a Unified Energy Interface (UEI) for EV charging and energy services.
- Stronger institutional alignment through a Low Carbon Deve-lopment Cell under the PM's climate architecture and align-ing budgets with the NDC cycle.

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Federalism Article

Decentralisation, Regional Aspirations and the Need for Federal Restructuring in India

—Shivaji Tripathi

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India's federal experiment, now well into its eighth decade, was never a simple compact between equals. It was, at its founding, a negotiated settlement between the imperatives of national unity and the social reality of a vast, linguistically plural and culturally layered subcontinent. The Constitution of 1950 emerged from an independence movement that had simultaneously promised self-determination to every region, caste, linguistic group and community, while also entrusting the newly sovereign state with the overriding duty to preserve territorial integrity. The result was a Union, which equipped the Centre with powers that would make any classical federalist uncomfortable.

Decades on, the fault lines of this arrangement have not merely persisted they have deepened. The demands of Tamil Nadu over the delimitation exercise, the grievances of Andhra Pradesh over the bifurcation settlement, the simmering discontent in Telangana over the slow progress of promised assurances, and the chronic underdevelopment of states across the eastern and northeastern arc of the country—all of these speak to a single structural truth : India's federal architecture is under serious stress. The question is no longer whether restructuring is necessary, but whether the political imagination exists to undertake it.

The Constitutional Design and its Inherent Tensions

The founding fathers consciously created a Constitution that leaned towards the Centre. The Seventh Schedule, which distributes legislative powers between Parliament and the State legislatures, grants Parliament not only an extensive Union List of 97 subjects but also a Concurrent List on which Parliament's legislation prevails in the event of conflict. The Residuary powers vest with the Centre. Emergency provisions under Articles 356 and 360 allow the Union to effectively dissolve elected State governments or assume control over financial affairs in times, it deems serious. The appointment of Governors, a colonial inheritance barely transformed, gives the Union a continuing presence at the heart of every state's executive.

This design was, in part, a response to Partition and the fear that centrifugal forces might tear apart what had just been assembled. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, defended the constitutional scheme by arguing that India had to be federal in normal times and unitary in abnormal ones. Yet what the drafters perhaps did not anticipate was the degree to which normal democratic governance would itself become a theatre of Centre-State conflict and the ways in which the instruments of central authority would be deployed not in genuine emergencies but as tools of partisan advantage. The repeated invocation of Article 356 through the 1970s and 1980s, until the Supreme Court's landmark judgement in S.R. Bommai *Vs*. Union of India (1994) imposed meaningful judicial scrutiny on imposition of President's Rule in States. But subtler forms of centralisation continue to operate through financial channels, administrative conditionalities and the quiet marginalisation of the State legislatures.

Fiscal Federalism : The Heart of the Problem

If there is one domain where the asymmetry between constitutional text and ground reality is most palpable, it is public finance. The Finance Commission, constituted every five years, distributes a share of central tax revenues to the states. The Fifteenth Finance Commission's award of 41 per cent of the divisible pool to the States was a modest correction, but it masked a more troubling trajectory : the growing reliance by successive Union governments on cesses and surcharges, which are excluded from the divisible pool altogether.

Between 2011-12 and 2022-23, the share of cess and surcharge in gross tax revenue of the Union government grew substantially, crossing nearly a quarter of all central tax receipts by some estimates. States receive no share of this revenue, but they must nonetheless administer welfare schemes and public services that depend critically on the total fiscal quantum available to them. Consequently, states—especially the industrializing states of the south and west that are net contributors to the tax pool—increasingly feel that they are being asked to perform more, for less. The political resonance of this grievance should not be underestimated; it has begun to find expression in regional electoral platforms in ways that challenge the assumptions of national political parties.

The Goods and Services Tax regime, which subsumed a range of state taxes and was framed as a cooperative federalist achievement, has added its own complications. The promised compensation for states for revenue shortfalls expired in 2022 and states that had built fiscal planning around GST buoyancy found themselves at the mercy of a Compensation Council that was never intended to be permanent. The architecture of the GST Council, while innovative in design, has not proved sufficient to prevent the Centre from using the mechanism in

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ways that disadvantage revenue-deficient but politically significant states.

Regional Aspirations and the Politics of Recognition

Beyond fiscal flows, the deeper tension in Indian federalism is cultural and political. India's states were reorganised along linguistic lines between 1956 and the early 1960s following the States Reorganisation Commission's report and the subsequent creation of several new states, including Maharashtra and Gujarat. This reorganization was a profound acknowledgement that linguistic identity was a legitimate basis for administrative and political recognition. Yet it was also an incomplete settlement. The demand for Gorkhaland continues to periodically convulse the hills of West Bengal. The Bodoland movement in Assam reflects aspirations for recognition that have not been fully met even by the creation of the Bodoland Territorial Council. In Manipur, competing ethnic visions of the State's geography have produced a humanitarian crisis that the federal framework has struggled to address.

These are not merely law-and-order problems. They are expressions of a more fundamental demand the demand to be governed by those who share one’s language, culture and lived experience and to have one's region's priorities reflected in public policy rather than subordinated to the interests of distant capitals. The formation of new States—Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand in 2000—demonstrated that political will exists to respond to these demands, but also that new state formation alone does not resolve structural inequities if the fiscal and administrative architecture remains unchanged.

The delimitation controversy that has erupted in recent years is perhaps the starkest illustration of how demographic asymmetry translates into representational injustice. States in the south—Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka successfully implemented family planning policies over decades and achieved demographic transitions that their counterparts in the north did not. Under a strictly population-based delimitation, the political reward for this success would be a reduction in their share of seats in the Lok Sabha, effectively penalising states for governing well. Tamil Nadu's political leadership gave voice to a sentiment widespread among southern politicians when it argued that the delimitation exercise amounted to a double punishment—first for contributing more to the central pool than was returned and second for now losing voice in the national legislature.

Cooperative Federalism

Since 2014, the language of cooperative federalism has been deployed with considerable frequency by Union government. The replacement of the Planning Commission by the NITI Aayog was presented as a shift from a command and control planning model to a consultative one. The GST Council was held up as a model of cooperative governance. Yet the substance has not always matched the rhetoric and the gap between the vocabulary of partnership and the reality of centralisation has itself become a source of political friction.

The NITI Aayog, stripped of the Planning Commission's authority to allocate plan funds, became an advisory body without binding influence. States that had depended on the Planning Commission for developmental investments found themselves negotiating directly with individual ministries, a process that tends to favour states with stronger political ties to the Union government of the day. Centrally Sponsored Schemes, which continue to dominate large areas of social sector spending, come with conditionalities that limit state flexibility even as they claim to advance national developmental priorities. A state government that wishes to adapt a centrally sponsored health or nutrition scheme to the specific needs of its population often finds itself constrained by guidelines drafted in offices far removed from ground realities.

True cooperative federalism would require, at minimum, that the Union government genuinely consult state governments before legislating on subjects that impinge on state interests—even when those subjects formally lie on the Union or Concurrent List. The farm laws of 2020, which were introduced without meaningful consultation with state governments or the farming communities they affect, illustrated the opposite instinct : the tendency to treat states as implementing agencies rather than co-equal partners in governance. Their eventual repeal, under pressure of a prolonged and painful agitation, was instructive not only as a policy lesson but as a reminder of the costs of bypassing federal consultation.

The Case for Federal Restructuring

The case for a comprehensive rethinking of India's federal architecture rests not on any secessionist impulse but on the pragmatic recognition that a Union of 1·4 billion people across 28 States and 8 Union Territories cannot be governed effectively from a single centre. The administrative, ecological and economic diversity of India is simply too vast for centralised decision-making to be either responsive or efficient. What works in Gujarat does not necessarily work in Nagaland. What Rajasthan needs from an agricultural policy is not what Kerala or West Bengal requires.

A restructured federal arrangement would need to address several dimensions simultaneously. On the fiscal side, the Union government should commit to a statutory ceiling on cess and surcharges as a proportion of gross tax revenue, and to expanding the divisible pool accordingly. The Finance Commission's mandate should be broadened to include an assessment of states' developmental obligations, not merely their fiscal capacity. On the legislative side, Parliament's power to legislate on Concurrent List subjects should be subject to a consultative procedure that ensures states have a formal and meaningful voice before central legislation displaces state law.

On the question of representation, the delimitation exercise requires a constitutional solution that does not penalise demographic

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achievement. One model worth examining is the strengthening of the Rajya Sabha as a genuinely federal chamber—one in which states are represented with greater parity and whose consent is required for legislation that substantially affects state functions. The Rajya Sabha was designed partly to serve this function, but its current composition and electoral method mean it functions more as a delayed echo of the Lok Sabha than as a genuine chamber of federal balance. A more robust upper house, with clearer constitutional authority over Centre-State financial relations and concurrent legislation, could provide the structural counterweight that India's asymmetric federalism currently lacks.

Conclusion : Federalism as a Living Compact

The Indian federal structure is not fragile. Seven decades of democracy, economic development and social churning have produced institutions and a political culture robust enough to accommodate enormous diversity. But robustness should not be confused with rigidity. The federal compact that sustains the Union's legitimacy must be periodically renegotiated to reflect changing realities—demographic shifts, economic differentiation, evolving regional identities and the growing administrative competence of state, which has accumulated through decades of experience and democratic accountability.

Regional aspirations, when channelled through democratic and constitutional means, are not threats to national unity—they are its most durable foundation. A Union in which Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Meghalaya feel genuinely represented in the making of national policy, and genuinely empowered in the delivery of governance to their people, is a stronger Union than one held together by fiscal dependence and constitutional asymmetry alone. History has consistently demonstrated that federal arrangements which leave strong regional identities unrecognized, eventually tend to produce the very instabilities they were designed to prevent.

The demand for federal restructuring is, ultimately, a demand to take the promise of Indian democracy seriously to ensure that the people of every region, in every language, through every elected government they have chosen, can meaningfully shape the conditions of their own lives. That is not a demand the Centre can indefinitely defer. It is an invitation to build a Union worthy of the civilisation it represents and one equal to the complexity of the century ahead.

Practice Question for Prelims :

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Fiscal Federalism :

1. Cess and surcharge are not included in the taxes that are shared with the States.
2. The Finance Commission is constituted every five years.
3. All taxes imposed by the Union Government are shared with the States.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 1 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

Ans. (A)

Practice Question for Mains

Q. How are regional aspirations of states in India influencing the federal structure ? Discuss with suitable examples. **(250 words)**

P.Darpan

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Conclusion

NITI Aayog's framing is clear : India's Net Zero pathway is not only a climate obligation, but it is also a development opportunity. The transition, if managed well, can create a new growth model that is cleaner, more resilient, and globally competitive. But success depends on getting the sequencing right : building efficient cities and buildings now, scaling clean power alongside electrification, securing finance and minerals, and protecting workers and regions through a credible Just Transition.

The reports conclude with an important message for the Global South: if India can combine economic vitality with sustainability at this scale, it can offer a credible Indian Development Model, a 'lighthouse' approach that demonstrates how development and climate commitments can move forward together, anchored in fairness and climate justice.

Practice Question for Prelims :

Q. With reference to the 'Scenarios Towards Viksit Bharat and Net Zero' reports released by NITI Aayog, consider the following statements :

1. Under the Net Zero Scenario, electricity's share in final energy demand is projected to rise to about 60% by 2070.
2. The share of fossil fuels in India's primary energy mix is projected to increase by 2070 under the Net Zero pathway.
3. The Net Zero Scenario estimates a cumulative investment requirement of over USD 20 trillion by 2070.
4. Critical mineral demand under the Net Zero Scenario is expected to decrease compared to current policy trends.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

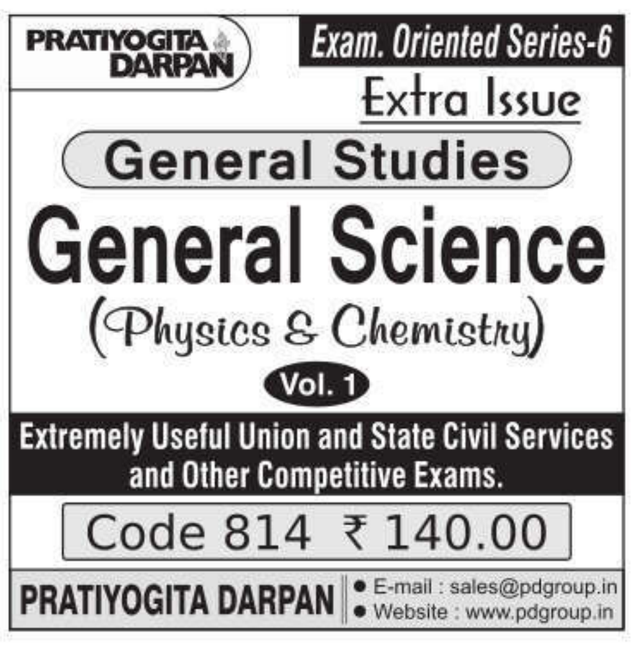
(A) Only 1 and 3
(B) Only 1, 2 and 4
(C) Only 2 and 4
(D) Only 1, 3 and 4

Ans. (A)

Practice Question for Mains

Q. India's Net Zero transition represents an unprecedented developmental experiment of scale. Discuss. **(250 words)**

P.Darpan



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Development and Employment Article

AI, Employment and Human Capital : Strategic Options for India

—Ravi Singh

As India marches toward its vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, the convergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and human capital has emerged as the most critical pivot for its economic trajectory. The Economic Survey 2025-26 characterises AI not as a 'prestige race' but as a pragmatic economic strategy. For a nation with a median age of approximately 28 years, the challenge lies in transitioning from a 'labour-arbitrage' model to a 'skill-value' model.

AI, Employment and Human Capital : Strategic Options for India

1. The Paradox of Disruption: Creative Destruction : The impact of AI on the Indian labour market is multidimensional, acting simultaneously as a disruptor and an enabler.

- **The Threat to the 'Service Hub' Model :** Traditionally, India's IT-BPM sector thrived on cost-arbitrage for routine, rule-based tasks. Generative AI (GenAI) now threatens 15-20% of entry-level engineering roles (*e.g.*, coding, basic testing and data entry).
- **The Efficiency Dividend :** Conversely, AI-driven productivity gains can potentially add $1·2–$1·5 trillion to India's GDP by 2035.
- **Sectoral Vulnerability :** While the tertiary sector faces immediate shifts, the secondary (manufacturing) and primary (agriculture) sectors see AI as a tool for 'bridging the gap' rather than replacing labour—exemplified by AI-based precision farming and predictive maintenance in MSMEs.

2. From 'Demographic Dividend' to 'Digital Dividend' : India's demographic advantage is a 'perishable asset' if not aligned with the AI era. The current status of human capital reflects a Dual-Challenge :

- **The Employability Gap :** As per the India Skills Report 2025, nearly 55% of Indian graduates were considered to be globally employable by 2025. The mismatch between static university curricula and dynamic industry requirements remains a structural bottleneck.
- **The 'Human-in-the-Loop' (HITL) Model :** Strategic focus is shifting toward Augmentation over Replacement. This requires a shift in the 'Human Capital Sutra'—prioritizing emotional intelligence, ethical reasoning and complex problem-solving—traits where AI currently lags.

Strategic Options for India : A Multidimensional Roadmap

To ensure that AI leads to inclusive growth, the government and private sector must adopt a multi-pronged strategy.

1. Sovereign AI and Data Sovereignty : India cannot rely on 'Black Box' models developed in Silicon Valley, which may carry inherent Western biases.

- **The IndiaAI Mission :** With an outlay of over ₹ 10,000 crore, this mission aims to establish a Sovereign AI Compute Capacity. By providing subsidized GPU access to startups, India ensures that innovation stays indigenous.
- **Bhashini (National Language Translation Mission) :** AI must speak the language of the masses. Breaking the English-language barrier is crucial for including the rural workforce in the digital economy.

2. Regulatory Governance : The 'Middle Path' : India's regulatory stance—exemplified by the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023—must balance innovation with protection.

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- **Risk-Based Regulation :** Instead of over-regulating the technology, India should regulate the 'Use Case'. High-risk AI (*e.g.*, in recruitment or credit scoring) requires strict oversight to prevent Algorithmic Bias.
- **The 'Safety-First' Approach :** Aligning with the Bletchley Declaration, India must ensure that AI development does not infringe on the Right to Privacy (Article 21 of the Constitution).

3. Reimagining Social Security: The Gig Economy : AI accelerates the 'Uberization' of work. As permanent jobs give way to task-based contracts, the traditional employer-employee social contract breaks down.

- **Portable Social Security :** India needs a system where benefits (pension, health insurance) are linked to the worker (via Aadhaar/e-Shram), not the employer.
- **Digital Labour Rights :** Preventing 'Algorithmic Management' where workers are penalised by opaque AI systems without a human-in-the-loop.

The Global South Perspective : India as a 'Vishwa Bandhu'

India has a strategic opportunity to lead the Global South in AI ethics. While the US follows a 'Market-Led' model and the EU a 'Rights-Led' model, India can champion a 'Development-Led' model. This involves using AI to solve 'Mass-Scale Challenges'—public health, literacy, and financial inclusion—rather than just 'First-World Problems'.

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Challenges and Structural Bottlenecks

1. Energy Consumption : AI training requires massive data centers, which are energy-intensive. This creates a tension between Digitalization and India's Net Zero 2070 goals.

2. The 'Black Box' Problem : Transparency in AI decision-making is essential for public trust in government services.

3. Hardware Dependency : India remains heavily dependent on imports for semi-conductors and high-end chips. The success of the India Semiconductor Mission is a prerequisite for AI sovereignty.

Pros & Cons : A Balanced View

1. The Pros (Force Multiplier) :

- **Public Delivery :** Revolutionizing the JAM Trinity via local-language AI bots.
- **Health :** Improving the doctor-patient ratio through AI-driven Tele-diagnostics.
- **Economy :** Lowering logistics costs (currently ~13% of GDP) via PM Gati Shakti optimization.

2. The Cons (Structural Risks) :

- **Jobless Growth :** Potential for 'Technological Unemployment' among the youth bulge.
- **Algorithmic Bias :** Skewed data perpetuating caste or gender discrimination.
- **Hardware Dependency :** Heavy reliance on imported semiconductors (Pax Silica concerns).

Way Forward : The '3R' Strategy

The 3R Strategy is a foundational framework adopted by the Government of India (specifically articulated during the IndiaAI Impact Summit 2026) to manage the transition of its human capital into an AI-driven economy.

It is designed to ensure that the 'Demographic Dividend' does not turn into a liability due to automation. The strategy focusses on three progressive stages of human resource development :

1. Reskill (The Immediate Shift) : This pillar targets the existing workforce, particularly those in sectors highly vulnerable to automation, such as entry-level IT, data entry, and routine administrative roles.

- **Objective** : To prevent 'technological unemployment' by teaching workers how to use AI as a tool rather than being replaced by it.
- **Action :** Expanding programmes like FutureSkills PRIME and partnering with over 100 colleges to provide short-term, industry-aligned AI certifications.
- **Focus** : Transitioning a traditional coder into an 'AI-Prompt Engineer' or an accountant into an 'AI-driven Financial Analyst'.

2. Upskill (The Value Addition) : Upskilling is aimed at enhancing the capabilities of professionals who are already in the workforce but need deeper technical or 'AI-adjacent' expertise to stay competitive.

- **Objective :** To move India from a 'low-cost labour' model to a 'high-value talent' hub.
- **Action :** The IndiaAI Future-Skills initiative, which supports 5,000 postgraduates and 500 Ph.D. scholars in advanced AI research.
- **Focus** : Developing 'Human-in-the-Loop' (HITL) expertise, where humans oversee and correct complex AI outputs in specialized fields like healthcare diagnostics or legal research.

3. Redesign (The Structural Reform) : This is the long-term vision involving the complete overhaul of the education and job architecture in India to align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

- **Objective** : To create a 'future-ready' pipeline by integrating AI literacy into the very foundation of learning.
- **Action :** Introducing AI and Computational Thinking in schools from Class 3 onwards, starting in the 2026-27 academic session.
- **Focus** : Shifting from rote learning to 'Cognitive Premiums'—prioritizing critical thinking, ethics and emotional intelligence, which are traits AI cannot easily replicate.

Conclusion : The 'Human-Centric' Frontier

Artificial Intelligence is neither a panacea for all of India's woes nor an inevitable harbinger of joblessness. It is a force multiplier. The 'Strategic Option' for India is not to resist the tide of automation but to steer it towards Human-Centric Development.

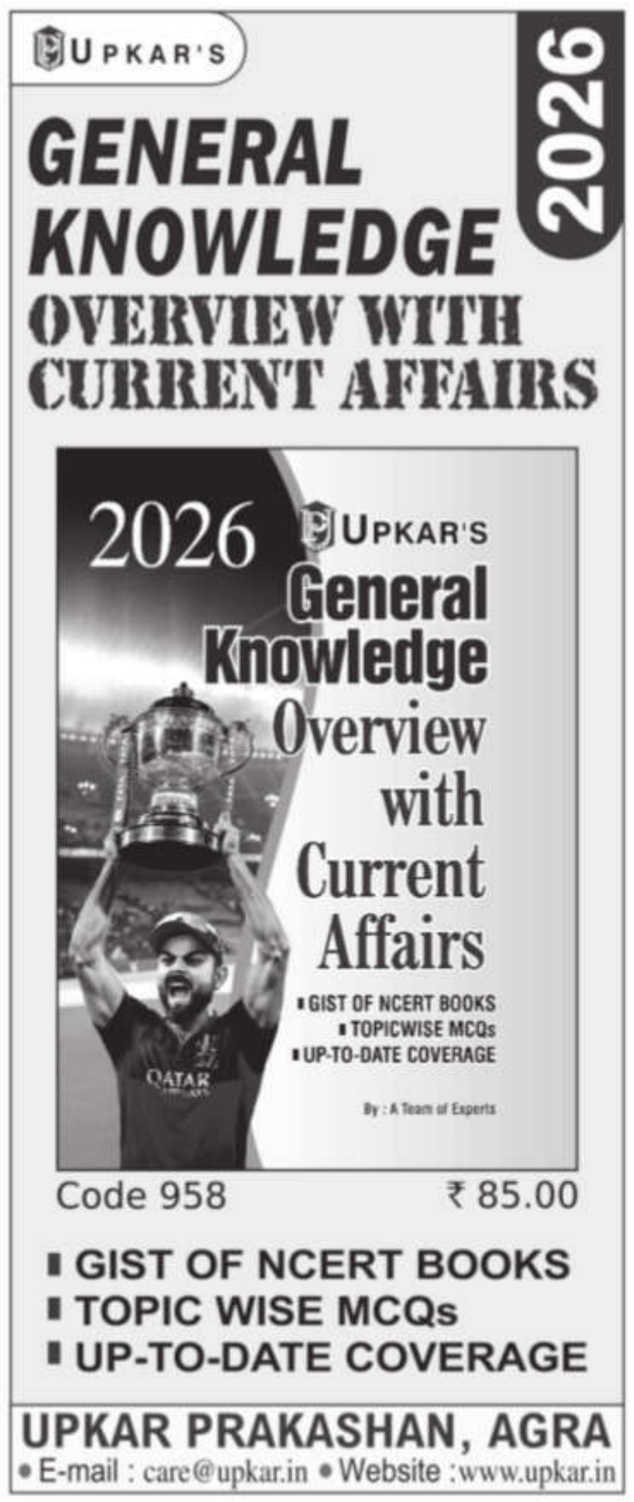
The goal should be 'AI for All', where technology serves to augment the capabilities of the tailor in Tiruppur, the farmer in Vidarbha and the coder in Bengaluru. If India can successfully recalibrate its human capital through the '3R Strategy' (Reskill, Upskill and Redesign), it will not just survive the AI revolution—it will lead it.

Practice Question for Mains

Q. The Economic Survey 2024-25 suggests that AI may not be a 'universal panacea' for a labour-intensive economy like India. In this light, discuss the strategic significance of the 'IndiaAI Mission' in fostering an inclusive AI ecosystem. **(250 words)**

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Climate Change Article

Tourism and Water Stake in Himalayas

—Bipra Biswambhara

As snowfall began in 2026, reports of heavy traffic jams in the Himalayas emerged across news outlets, as tourists from the neighbouring states rushed to the Himalayan states like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh to experience the season's first snowfall.

But at the same time, another development was making the headlines—the 2025 snow update report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, which highlighted that across the Hindu Kush-Himalayas (NKH) region, the duration that snow remains on the ground has fallen to its lowest since the last 23 years. Snow persistence was found to be 23·6% below normal, marking four of the past five winters as below-normal in snow cover.

From Snow Spectacle to Snow Scarcity

December 2025 and January 2026 witnessed up to 90% deficit in snowfall in some of the western Himalayan regions. Snowfall in the Himalayas is not just a tourist attraction or a spectacle; it is essential for sustaining life across India. The Himalayan snow, otherwise called the 'Third pole of the world', sustain glaciers, rivers, agriculture, ecosystems, forests and prevents droughts and forest fires.

The Himalayas, also known as 'The abode of the snow' and 'The water tower of Asia', feed 10 of Asia's major river systems. Much of the Indian subcontinent relies upon the Himalayan melt water for its sustenance.

This problem of diminishing snowfall is further compounded by the fact that not only is snowfall reducing, but existing glaciers are thinning and perennial springs are disappearing. A 2018 report by the NITI Aayog stated that 50% of the Himalayan perennial springs are drying up or turning seasonal.

This combination of declining snowfall and rapid glacier loss represents a hydrological crisis in the Himalayan region threatening water security for over 1 billion of people living across Asia.

The Drivers of the Declining Snow and Hydrological Crisis

Due to an increase in global average temperature as a result of global warming, glaciers are getting melted faster than they are accumulating, leading to an overall thinning of glaciers or glacier loss.

The decline in winter snowfall has been attributed by the meteorologists to the weakening of the Western Disturbances that bring rain and snowfall in parts of northern and northwestern India during winters. The weakening of western disturbances is caused by a northward displacement of the westerly jet stream and stronger high pressure ridges over Central Asia, which suppress rainfall over northern India. Of late, this northward displacement of the westerly jet stream has become more frequent.

Air pollution too plays a key role in accelerating snow melt. Black carbon particles released from industrial emission settle on snow surfaces, reducing albedo and accelerating the melting rate of snow and glacier.

Changes in land use patterns due to infrastructure development and deforestation also reduces availability of moisture and introduces changes in the microclimate, causing an increase in dryness and a reduction in snowfall.

Tourism Escalates Water Demand in an Already Shrinking Watershed

The number of tourists arriving in the Himalayan region was just 2·5 million in the early 2000s. This number has increased tenfold since then. Tourism not only creates additional pressure on an already fragile ecosystem in terms of infrastructure, but also an increased demand for water consumption in an area that is bearing the burden of climate change and weakening western disturbance.

Peak tourism season coincides with the natural season of low water recharge. People visit the mountains to escape the summer heat; however, this coincides with prolonged dry periods in the Himalayan regions. Tourists peak during such a time leads to an increased demand for water and intensive competition for already stressed water sources, leading to more groundwater extraction. Hotels and restaurants particularly exhibit high water consumption for drinking and flushing off sewage.

Concurrently, rising tourist footfall in these Himalayan states leads to a greater demand for infrastructure, such as, road widening, tunnelling and hydro-power projects, which potentially disrupt underground aquifers, leading to poor spring recharge, increased surface run-off, thereby destabilizing the geologically sensitive slopes.

Tourism-led development in the Himalayas has replaced traditional water harvesting and water conservation practices with modern centralized solutions, which are focussed on hydro infrastructure and may not always be suitable for the local geographical and ecological conditions.

At the same time, the increased sewage generation and poor solid waste management due to increased tourist footfall, is leading to contamination of locally available water sources.

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This problem is not unique to India. Neighbouring countries like Nepal and Bhutan too are suffering from frequent water shortages due to excess tourism and the effects of global warming and climate change.

Institutional Gaps Leading to an Emerging Water Crisis

In the Himalayan states, water scarcity is not just an ecological problem. It is a fundamental governance issue where water management has not been integrated into tourism planning. Current water scarcity solutions mostly focus on protecting tourist experiences at the cost of local residents or environmental sustainability.

At present, there is dearth of scientific carrying capacity assessment, which makes it difficult to place a state-wide limit on tourist numbers. At the same time, licenses to operate hotels and resorts are granted without proper environmental assessment and water availability audits. Environmental impact assessments, if conducted at all, are not watershed-based and remain project-specific, ignoring the larger water scarcity problem.

Simultaneously, weak land use regulation and poorly planned infrastructure expansion, such as road widening and tunnelling, without proper hydrological mapping, leads to mindless construction on recharge zones and slopes leading to encroachment of wetlands and natural drainage channels, further exacerbating the existing water crunch.

Low community participation and weak local governance, has brought about neglect of traditional water harvesting systems while failing to provide equally good modern solutions.

Re-evaluating Water Governance in the Himalayas

While tourism remains one of the major revenue earners for the Himalayan states, it has to be sustainable. Extensive watershed level carrying capacity assessments must be undertaken. These assessments have to be accompanied by real time integrated monitoring of glacier, snow coverage and springs. This would lead to placing a cap on the number of tourists allowed within a season to not stretch the Himalayas beyond their ecological limits.

Hydrological audit should be made mandatory before giving licenses to hotels or resorts or carrying out infrastructure projects. Similarly, all commercial establishments and residential associations, should be required to conduct waste water recycling and rain water harvesting.

Local government has to be strengthened and community participation has to be encouraged, while simultaneously reviving traditional water harvesting methods as well as rejuvenating existing springs in mission mode.

Way Forward

The Himalayas are experiencing challenges of global warming, ecological pressures, institutional complacency and rising tourist demand. The shrinking snow line is no longer a scenic problem, but one that threatens survival. Without systemic reforms and planned interventions, temporary water shortage can evolve into full blown water crisis. Climate change may be a global problem, but it can be combatted through locally designed solutions. Snowfall patterns may not fully recover, but the Himalayan States can learn to adapt to the changing hydrological realities.

Practice Questions for Prelims :

Q.1. With reference to the hydrological significance of the Himalayas, consider the following statements :

1. The Himalayas are referred to as the 'Water Tower of Asia' because they feed several major river systems of the continent.
2. Declining snowfall in the Himalayas has no direct impact on groundwater recharge in the Indian subcontinent.
3. Black carbon deposition on snow surfaces can accelerate glacier melt.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only 1 and 3
(B) Only 2
(C) Only 1 and 2
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

Ans. (A)

Q.2. Consider the following factors contributing to declining winter snowfall in the Western Himalayas :

1. Northward shift of the westerly jet stream
2. Strengthening of Western Disturbances
3. Increased high-pressure ridges over Central Asia
4. Rapid urbanization in peninsular India

Which of the above are correct ?

(A) Only 1 and 3
(B) Only 2 and 4
(C) Only 1, 2 and 3
(D) Only 1, 3 and 4

Ans. (A)

Practice Question for Mains

Q. Discuss the drivers of declining snowfall and glacier retreat in the Himalayan region. Examine the role of tourism, institutional gaps and water governance in aggravating water insecurity in Himalayan region.

(250 words)

P.Darpan

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Educational Qualifications :

1. TET Primary Teacher (Class 1-5) : Candidates must have a Bachelor's degree from an NCTE-recognized institution along with a valid teacher training qualification such as BTC, B.El.Ed, or equivalent. Final-year candidates are also eligible. In general, a minimum of 50% marks in graduation or the relevant training programme is required.

2. TET Upper Primary Teacher (Class 6-8) : Candidates must have a Bachelor's degree with at least 50% marks (45% in some cases as per rules) from an NCTE-recognized institution along with a valid teacher training qualification such as B.Ed, BTC, B.El.Ed, or equivalent. Final-year candidates of these courses are also eligible. Additionally, candidates with specialized education qualifications (like Special Education) from RCI-recognized institutes are eligible. In some cases, candidates with 50% marks in intermediate and a 4-year integrated teaching programme can also apply.

How to Apply : To download official notification for knowing the exam., pattern, syllabus and procedure to apply, the candidate must visit the commission's official website-www.upessc.gov.in P.Darpan

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Green Energy Article

Hydrogen Valley Innovation Cluster : India's Shift Towards a Green Future

—Neha Sansarwal

India stands at a crucial moment in its energy transition. Growing climate concerns, volatile fossil fuel markets, and increasing dependence on energy imports are pushing countries to accelerate the shift toward cleaner and more secure energy systems. For a rapidly developing economy like India, balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability has become a key policy challenge.

In this context, green hydrogen has emerged as a promising solution for decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors such as steel, fertilisers, and transportation while strengthening long-term energy security. Recognising its strategic potential, the government has launched the National Green Hydrogen Mission in 2023 to position India as a global hub for green hydrogen production and export. Alongside national policy initiatives, the idea of developing Hydrogen Valley is gaining attention as a practical model to accelerate hydrogen deployment across industries and regions.

Several pilot hydrogen valley projects are being planned in locations such as Pune, Jodhpur, Bhubaneswar, and the state of Kerala. These emerging clusters aim to create integrated ecosystems for hydrogen production, distribution, and utilisation, supporting India's broader climate commitments to attain net zero by 2070. The Hydrogen Valley Innovation Clusters (HVICs) aim to showcase India's first large-scale hydrogen demonstration projects and serve as living laboratories for innovation, standardization and policy development.

- Hydrogen Valley Innovation Clusters (HVICs) represent a transformative step in India's transition toward a sustainable and secure energy future.
- By integrating green hydrogen production, storage, transportation, and end-use applications within a regional ecosystem, these clusters aim to decarbonise key sectors such as steel, fertilisers, transport and power generation.
- Supported by initiatives like the National Green Hydrogen Mission, HVICs align with India's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement while strengthening energy security and industrial competitiveness.
- As Ministry of New and Renewable Energy seek to establish HVICs in Pune, Jodhpur, Odisha and Kerala, the initiative highlights the country's ambition to become a global hub for green hydrogen innovation production and exports.
- Despite challenges such as high production costs, infrastructure gaps, and water requirements, HVICs can play a crucial role in driving India's low-carbon industrial transformation and long-term energy resilience.

Understanding the Hydrogen Valley Concept

A Hydrogen Valley refers to a geographically integrated ecosystem where hydrogen is produced, distributed, and utilised within a specific region. In such clusters, hydrogen is ideally produced locally through green hydrogen technologies, particularly electrolysis powered by renewable energy. The produced hydrogen is then transported through pipelines, storage tanks, or other transport networks and used across multiple sectors such as mobility, refineries, steel plants and power grids. By integrating production, distribution and consumption within one region, hydrogen valleys promote a sector-coupling approach, linking renewable energy systems with industrial processes and transportation networks.

The concept emphasises cluster-based development, often implemented through public-private partnerships (PPP). Hydrogen valleys are typically integrated with renewable energy parks and focus on industrial decarbonisation while simultaneously promoting innovation and research ecosystems. Globally, countries such as Germany and Japan have already begun developing hydrogen valley projects to accelerate their clean energy transitions. India is now exploring similar models but aims to adapt them to its own federal structure, industrial needs and developmental priorities.

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India's Policy Ecosystem for Hydrogen Transition

India's push toward hydrogen-based energy systems is supported by several policy initiatives. A major step was the launch of the National Green Hydrogen Mission in 2023, which aims to produce 5 million metric tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030. The mission also seeks to reduce nearly 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year and includes financial support for domestic electrolyser manufacturing.

These initiatives are aligned with India's commitments under the Paris Agreement, where the country has pledged to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030, increase non-fossil fuel energy capacity to about 50 per cent by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2070. HVICs can play an important role in achieving these targets by enabling cleaner industrial processes and integrating renewable energy sources into heavy industries.

Additionally, hydrogen development aligns with broader industrial initiatives such as Atmanirbhar Bharat, Make in India and the Production Linked Incentive Scheme.

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By promoting domestic manufacturing of hydrogen technologies and expanding renewable energy infrastructure, hydrogen valleys can strengthen India's industrial competitiveness while supporting the clean energy transition.

Multidimensional Significance of Hydrogen Valley Clusters

Hydrogen valley clusters hold significance across several dimensions—economic, environmental, technological, regional and geopolitical.

(1) From an economic perspective, hydrogen valleys can play a key role in industrial decarbonisation. Sectors such as steel, fertilisers, and petroleum refining are considered hard-to-abate industries because they rely heavily on fossil fuels and high-temperature processes. Green hydrogen can replace traditional grey hydrogen or coal-based processes in these sectors, thereby reducing emissions. The development of green hydrogen ecosystems can also create new employment opportunities in electrolyser manufacturing, infrastructure construction, renewable energy generation, and research and development. In the long run, India could potentially emerge as a major exporter of green hydrogen, particularly to energy-importing regions such as Europe and East Asia. However, the sector still faces challenges, including high capital costs and intense global competition.

(2) From an environmental standpoint, hydrogen valleys offer the potential to significantly reduce carbon emissions, especially in heavy industries and transportation sectors. They can also improve air quality in major industrial clusters by reducing dependence on fossil fuels. However, hydrogen production through electrolysis requires substantial quantities of water, creating concerns in water-stressed regions. On average, producing one kilogram of hydrogen requires about nine litres of water. Therefore, the environmental sustainability of hydrogen depends not only on its clean end-use but also on the source of electricity, water availability, and lifecycle emissions.

(3) The technological dimension is equally important. Electrolyser technology, which is essential for producing green hydrogen, is currently dominated by a few technologically advanced countries. India must therefore invest in domestic research and development to build indigenous capabilities. Hydrogen storage and transportation also present technological challenges because hydrogen is highly flammable and requires specialised high-pressure or cryogenic storage systems. Hydrogen valleys can serve as innovation hubs, linking research institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, startups and public sector enterprises to accelerate technological advancements.

(4) Hydrogen valleys also have implications on regional development. These clusters are likely to emerge in regions with strong renewable energy potential, established industrial corridors, or coastal access for exports. As a result, states rich in solar or wind resources may attract more investment, requiring effective coordination between the central and state governments. Issues such as land acquisition, environmental clearances and infrastructure planning will require cooperative federalism. However, there is also a risk that wealthier states could attract disproportionate investment, potentially leading to regional disparities.

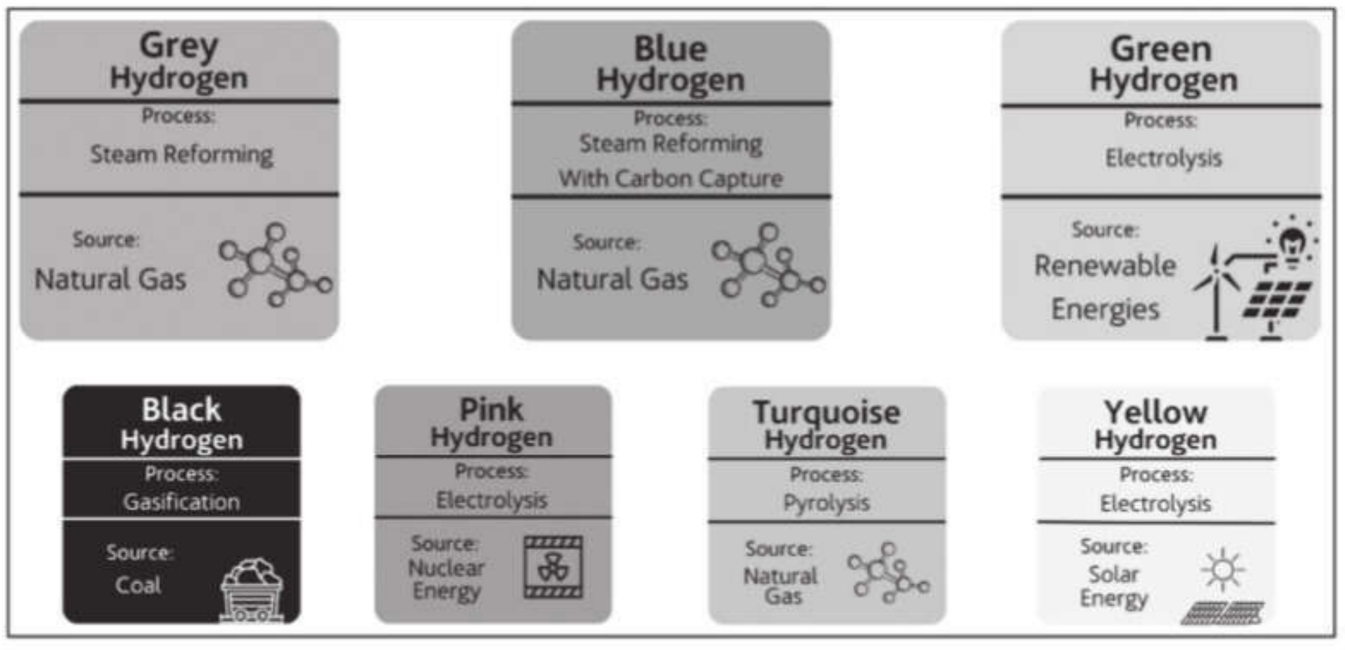
(5) Another important dimension is energy security and geopolitics. India currently imports nearly 85 per cent of its crude oil, making the economy vulnerable to global price fluctuations and supply disruptions. Developing a domestic hydrogen economy can help diversify the energy mix and reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports. Recent geopolitical tensions in West Asia, particularly the conflict involving Iran and Israel, highlight the fragility of global energy supply chains. Potential disruptions in shipping routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant share of the world's oil passes, could severely affect countries like India that rely heavily on imported energy. These developments underline the strategic importance of investing in domestically produced clean energy alternatives.

In this context, India has also begun engaging in global hydrogen diplomacy, strengthening partnerships with the European Union and Japan to develop technology, investments and supply chains for the emerging hydrogen economy. Such collaborations can help India integrate into new global clean-energy networks while reducing exposure to geopolitical disruptions in fossil fuel markets.

Challenges in Implementing Hydrogen Valley Clusters

Despite their potential, hydrogen valley projects face several challenges. One of the primary barriers is the high cost of green hydrogen production, which is currently two to three times more expensive than conventional grey hydrogen derived from natural gas. Infrastructure gaps also remain a major obstacle, including the need for dedicated hydrogen pipelines, large-scale storage facilities, and port infrastructure for export.

Financing is another critical challenge because hydrogen projects often involve long gestation periods and high initial investment, which may discourage private investors. In addition, the regulatory and safety framework for hydrogen is still



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evolving. Governments must establish clear safety standards, hydrogen handling codes and internationally recognised certification systems for green hydrogen. Water scarcity also presents a constraint, particularly in arid regions where allocating large quantities of water for hydrogen production may create competing demands.

Opportunities and the Way Forward

To fully realise the potential of hydrogen valleys, India must adopt an integrated planning approach. Hydrogen clusters should be aligned with existing industrial corridors, smart city initiatives, and dedicated freight corridors to maximise efficiency and reduce infrastructure costs.

Policy support should also prioritise hard-to-abate sectors, including steel production, fertiliser manufacturing and heavy transportation, where hydrogen can have the greatest impact in reducing emissions. Strengthening research and development will be essential, requiring closer collaboration between public sector organisations, private companies and academic institutions.

Public-private partnerships can play a vital role in overcoming financial barriers through mechanisms such as viability gap funding, which can help share risks between the government and private investors. At the international level, India should continue to pursue partnerships that facilitate access to climate finance, technology transfer and global certification frameworks for green hydrogen.

Overall, the development of Hydrogen Valley Innovation Clusters represents an important step in India's transition toward a low-carbon economy. If implemented effectively, these clusters can simultaneously promote industrial competitiveness, energy security, technological innovation and environmental sustainability.

A pragmatic approach is essential. Hydrogen valleys should complement, not abruptly replace, existing energy systems.

Conclusion

The Hydrogen Valley Innovation Cluster represents more than a technological initiative; it reflects a broader systemic shift toward a low-carbon and sustainable industrial economy. For a rapidly developing country like India, hydrogen valleys offer a practical pathway to balance economic growth, energy security and environmental responsibility.

However, the success of this model will depend on several critical factors, including technological self-reliance, financial viability, sustainable water management, inclusive regional development and robust regulatory frameworks. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated action between the Central and State governments, industries, research institutions and financial stakeholders.

A carefully phased strategy, supported by cooperative federalism and coherent industrial policies, can enable hydrogen valley clusters to become powerful engines of green growth. If implemented effectively, they have the potential to accelerate India's transition from a fossil-fuel-dependent economy to a resilient, innovation-driven and sustainable energy leader in the global clean-energy landscape.

Practice Questions for Prelims :

Q.1. With reference to Green Hydrogen in India, consider the following statements :

1. Green hydrogen is produced using renewable energy sources.
2. The National Green Hydrogen Mission aims to eliminate all fossil fuel imports by 2030.
3. The Hydrogen Valley model promotes sector coupling across multiple end-use applications.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 1 and 3
(C) Only 2 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

Ans. (B)

Q.2. Which of the following sectors are considered 'hard-to-abate' and potential beneficiaries of the hydrogen transition ?

1. Steel industry
2. Fertiliser industry
3. Thermal power plants

Select the correct answer using the code below :

(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2
(C) Only 1 and 3
(D) All 1, 2 and 3

Ans. (A)

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Practice Question for Mains

Q. Hydrogen Valley Innovation Clusters can redefine India's industrial and energy landscape, but their success depends on systemic reforms. Discuss. **(250 words)**

P.Darpan

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COAS General Upendra Dwivedi Felicitates IAF Team for IMAC Cup 2026 Success

On March 10, 2026, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi felicitated the Indian Air Force team for their outstanding performance in the International Military Adventure Challenge Cup 2026. The Indian Air Force (IAF) team competed against five friendly foreign countries and two sister service teams, securing first position in the duathlon event, upholding excellence in adventure sports and sportsmanship.

The Indian Army hosted the first-ever International Military Adventure Challenge Cup (IMACC) 2026 between the 18th and 23rd of February in the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas. Teams from seven friendly foreign countries—Bhutan, Brazil, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia, alongwith teams from the Indian Army, Indian Air Force, Indian Coast Guard and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) took part in IMACC 2026.

India Launches World's First Franchise-based Cycling League of India

On March 5, 2026, Union Minister Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya unveiled the logo of the world's first franchise-based Road Cycling League, named the Cycling League of India. The league will feature eight city or region-based franchises, each comprising ten cyclists. The Ministry said the team composition will include two international riders, bringing global expertise and competitiveness, along with two junior cyclists aimed at nurturing emerging Indian talent and ensuring long-term sustainability of the sport.

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Economy Article

Cryptocurrency Regulations in India : A Critical Assessment of Risks and Remedies

—Ajay Partap Tiwari

The growing access to financial services and the proliferation of digital currencies have given new dimensions to the modern economic structure. Digital payment systems, mobile banking and fintech innovations have accelerated financial transactions like never before. These systems, based on blockchain technology are reducing transaction costs and simplifying cross-border payments. As a result, the global financial market is becoming increasingly interconnected and dynamic. Blockchain-based digital currencies, known as cryptocurrencies are emerging as a new financial infrastructure in the global economy. Digital assets such as Bitcoin and Ethereum have created new opportunities for investment, payments and financial innovation.

Global Scenario

In the era of the digital economy, cryptocurrencies have become an integral part of the global financial system. Digital assets based on blockchain technology differ from traditional monetary systems because they are not governed by any central bank or government authority. Cryptocurrency began with the emergence of Bitcoin in 2009, followed by the development of several other digital currencies such as Ethereum, Ripple and Litecoin. The total value of the global cryptocurrency market in 2025 was estimated to be approximately $ 2–3 trillion. Around 500 million people worldwide are currently engaged in cryptocurrency and this number is expected to grow significantly by 2030. Its use is expanding in areas such as investment, digital payments, international transactions, and decentralized finance (DeFi). According to the Global Crypto Adoption Index 2025, India has emerged as the leading country in cryptocurrency adoption. The United States ranks second, while Pakistan and Vietnam hold the third and fourth positions, respectively. South Asia and Southeast Asia are leading regions in terms of global crypto adoption. The total value of cryptocurrency transactions in the Asia-Pacific region is estimated at $ 2·36 trillion. In view of the growing trend of cryptocurrency, the central banks of many countries are also working on developing their own digital currencies, commonly referred to as Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs).

Scenario in India

Cryptocurrencies have become a vital part of the global financial system, and India is no exception. Investment and trading in digital assets such as Bitcoin and Ethereum have grown rapidly in India over the past few years. Although, cryptocurrencies have not yet received legal tender status in India, their impact on investment and financial markets is clearly visible. The size of the Indian crypto market is gradually expanding. The direct share of crypto assets in India's GDP is estimated to be around 0·2 to 0·3 per cent. The total value of crypto transactions in India was estimated to be approximately ₹ 51,000 crore in 2024–25. India's crypto market is expected to grow to more than $ 15 billion in 2035. In terms of user base, India has nearly 9 to 11 crore crypto users. Retail investors and young people are increasingly attracted to cryptocurrency investments in India. According to CoinSwitch Q3 2025 report titled 'India's Crypto Portfolio : How India Invests' report, about 37% of crypto investors in India belong to Gen Z (18–25 years), with investment activity growing rapidly in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. Therefore, cryptocurrency is emerging as an important alternative investment option in India.

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Legal Framework at the Global Level

Globally, many countries have enacted legal provisions regarding cryptocurrencies. In the United States, cryptocurrencies are considered legal digital assets, and appropriate regulatory provisions have been implemented. The European Union has developed a comprehensive legal framework called the Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation (MiCA) to regulate the crypto market. In contrast, China has imposed a near-complete ban on crypto trading and mining. Countries such as Japan and Singapore have adopted cryptocurrencies in a regulated manner and have implemented investor protection and license-based systems. According to the World Economic Forum, blockchain technology and cryptocurrencies will play a significant role in the future digital economy.

Legal Framework for Cryptocurrency in India

Cryptocurrencies are not legally recognized as currency in India, but they are not completely banned either. In 2018, the Reserve Bank of India directed banks to refrain from handling crypto transactions, a directive that was later overturned by the Supreme Court of India in 2020. Following this decision, crypto trading in India became active again. From April 1, 2022, profits from virtual digital assets in India are taxed at 30% and are also subject to a 1% TDS on every crypto transaction.

Opportunities in Cryptocurrencies

Cryptocurrency, a digital currency based on blockchain tech-

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nology, is emerging as an alternative to the traditional financial system. Its usage, investment and innovation are rapidly increasing across the globe. Cryptocurrency holds significant potential for an emerging digital economy like India.

1. Boosting the Digital Economy : Cryptocurrency makes digital transactions faster, more secure and transparent, thereby strengthening the digital payment system. The rapid expansion of digital payment systems in India further enhances the potential of cryptocurrency and promotes digital financial inclusion.

2. Global Investment and Capital Flows : Cryptocurrency opens up new opportunities for international investment. Investors can invest in digital assets beyond traditional geographical boundaries. Many global companies and investment funds are now investing in crypto assets, creating new avenues for capital flows.

3. Innovation and Startup Ecosystem : Blockchain and cryptocurrency technologies are creating new opportunities for fintech startups. Concepts such as smart contracts, decentralized finance (DeFi) and digital tokens are generating new business possibilities. This could spur technological innovation and create employment opportunities.

4. Financial Inclusion : Cryptocurrency can connect financial services to people who lack access to traditional banking facilities. Through the internet and digital wallets, individuals can connect to the global financial system.

5. Facilitating Cross-Border Transactions : International payments through cryptocurrency can be faster and more cost-effective. While traditional banking systems often require more time and higher fees for cross-border payments, crypto technology simplifies and accelerates the process.

Key Challenges of Cryptocurrencies

Cryptocurrency offers many possibilities, but it also faces numerous challenges and risks.

1. Regulatory Uncertainty : There is no comprehensive national or international legal framework governing cryptocurrencies. In India, cryptocurrencies are not legally recognized as currency. Regulatory ambiguity creates insecurity among investors and complicates the effective regulation of the financial system.

2. High Volatility : Cryptocurrency prices fluctuate rapidly. For example, the prices of major cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum can rise or fall significantly within a short period, putting investors at risk of substantial losses.

3. Cybercrime and Fraud : Incidents such as hacking, scams, phishing, and money laundering are increasing on cryptocurrency-related platforms. Because transactions are often anonymous, it becomes easier for criminals to exploit them.

4. Lack of Consumer Protection : Consumers enjoy regulatory protection in the traditional banking system, but the crypto market lacks such safeguards. If an exchange or digital wallet encounters problems, investors may find it difficult to recover their funds.

5. Use in Illicit Activities : Cryptocurrencies can be used for activities such as illegal trade, tax evasion, and terrorist financing. This poses a major challenge for governments and regulatory authorities in terms of monitoring and regulation.

6. Lack of Awareness : Many people have limited understanding of digital currencies, which makes cryptocurrency investment challenging. Due to a lack of awareness and digital literacy, individuals may fall victim to poor investment decisions or fraud.

Conclusion

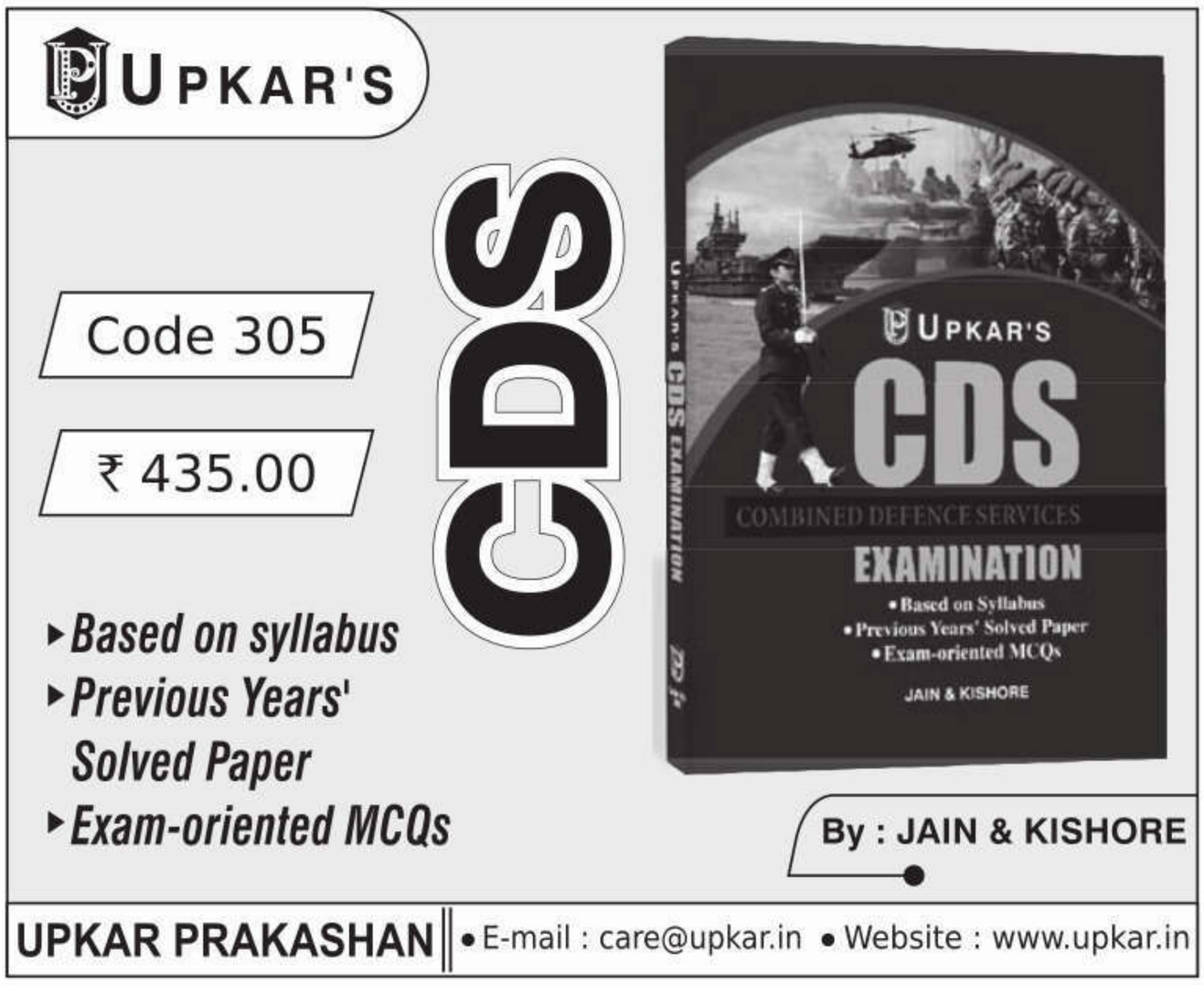
Cryptocurrencies constitute a core component of the digital economy and are increasingly becoming a permanent fixture of the global financial landscape. Their usage and investment are witnessing rapid growth worldwide, including in India. However, they are also associated with several inherent risks. Nevertheless, given the demands of the time and the need to strengthen the digital economy, there is a pressing need to establish appropriate regulatory authorities. If a robust policy framework is developed to address financial instability, tax evasion and cybercrime, cryptocurrencies can present a significant opportunity for India's digital economy and financial innovation. Their benefits can be harnessed through effective regulation, technological security and international cooperation. In the coming years, this technology is poised to exert an even more profound influence on global trade, investment and digital payment systems.

Practice Question for Mains

Q. Cryptocurrencies are emerging as an important component of the digital economy, but they also pose regulatory and financial risks.

(250 words)

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Internal Security Article

PRAHAAR : India's New National Counter-Terrorism Policy and Strategy

—Vidur Sharma

On 23 February, 2026, India crossed a defining threshold in its national security evolution. The government unveiled PRAHAAR—an acronym standing for Prevention, Responses, Aggregation of capacities, Human rights and the rule of law, Attenuation of radicalisation, Aligning international partnerships and Recovery marking the country's first-ever comprehensive, codified national counter-terrorism policy. The announcement was not merely administrative; it was doctrinal. For the first time, India consolidated decades of fragmented legislation, institutional precedent and adhoc executive practice into a single, unified strategic framework.

The timing is deliberate and significant. India's threat landscape has undergone a profound transformation over the past decade. Cross-border terrorism, once dominated by fidayeen-style attacks and insurgent ambushes, has mutated into something far more diffuse and technologically sophisticated. Terror networks today exploit encrypted messaging applications, cryptocurrency wallets, dark web financing, weaponised drones and algorithm-driven online radicalisation often with the covert backing of hostile state actors. PRAHAAR is India's formal answer to this new reality: an acknowledgement that the old playbook is no longer sufficient.

The Seven Pillars of PRAHAAR

At its core, PRAHAAR is structured around seven strategic pillars. The first is Prevention—shifting the emphasis from reactive policing to pre-emptive disruption. Central to this is the operationalisation of the Multi Agency Centre (MAC) and the Joint Task Force on Intelligence (JTFI), two bodies designed to enable real-time intelligence sharing between central and state agencies. In a threat environment characterised by decentralised terror cells and encrypted communications, this intelligence-first model is not optional—it is existential.

The second pillar, Response, addresses how India mobilises once a threat materialises or an attack occurs—ensuring that the institutional machinery is coordinated, swift and calibrated. The third pillar, Aggregation of capacities, speaks to the horizontal integration of resources : law enforcement, military assets, cyber units and forensic capabilities working as a unified whole rather than siloed departments.

The Human rights and rule of law pillar is arguably the doctrine's most important political statement. PRAHAAR explicitly anchors itself in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and newly enacted criminal codes, while affirming adherence to international covenants including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This is a deliberate attempt to preempt criticism of overreach and to lend the policy normative legitimacy at home and abroad. The National Investigation Agency (NIA), which underpins much of the policy's prosecutorial architecture, maintained a conviction rate of approximately 92 per cent in 2025, lending the framework considerable credibility.

The Attenuation of radicalisation pillar marks the most significant departure from India's historically kinetic approach to counter-terrorism. Rather than relying solely on military and police force, the doctrine calls for community leaders, NGOs, religious scholars and youth empowerment initiatives to address the socio-economic and ideological conditions that make radicalisation possible. This is a long-overdue recognition that bullets alone cannot defeat an ideology.

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The sixth pillar—Aligning international partnerships situates PRAHAAR within a global diplomatic framework. Through extradition treaties, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs), joint working groups and engagement with the United Nations, India seeks to tackle the transnational dimensions of terrorism that no state can address unilaterally. Finally, Recovery through a whole-of-society approach acknowledges that the aftermath of terrorism economic disruption, psychological trauma, community fracture demands structured, sustained attention.

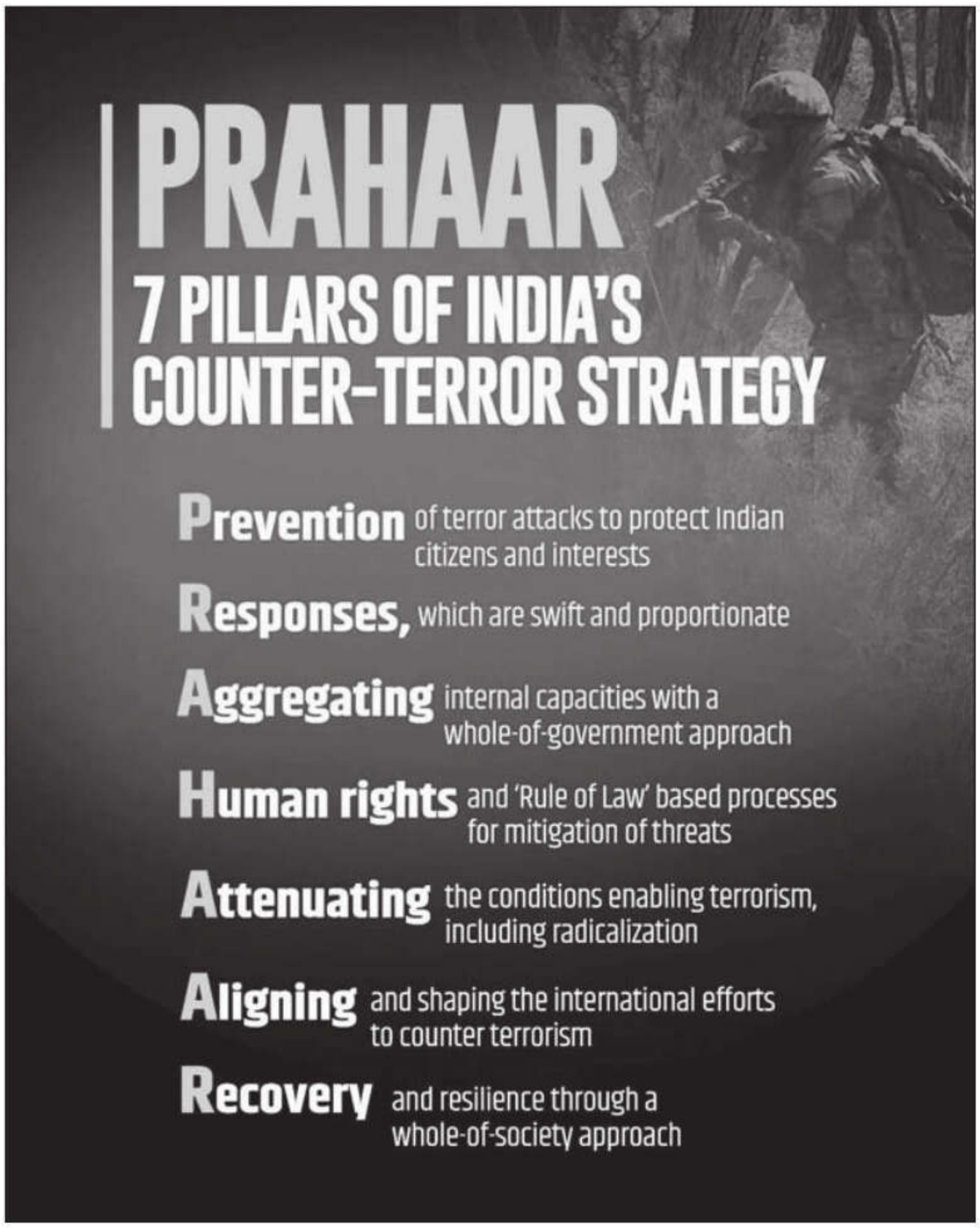
Hybrid Threats and the Digital Battlefield

Perhaps the most forward-looking dimension of PRAHAAR is its recognition of the hybrid threat matrix. The policy explicitly names dark web financing, crypto-enabled transactions, weaponised drones, cyberattacks and algorithm-driven radicalisation as components of contemporary terrorism. This represents a substantial departure from earlier frameworks that treated terrorism almost exclusively as a physical, kinetic phenomenon.

The implications are significant. Terror financing no longer flows only through Hawala networks or cash couriers—it moves through blockchain transactions and virtual currencies, often anonymised across jurisdictions. Online radicalisation no longer occurs solely in physical mosques or extremist camps—it unfolds in encrypted Telegram groups, g aming platform chat rooms and algorithmically curated social

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media feeds. PRAHAAR's acknowledgement of these dimensions signals strategic maturity, even if some of the operational mechanisms to address them remain under-specified in the policy's current form.

Where the Policy Falls Short : Critical Gaps

Several significant gaps merit attention. The most pressing is the policy's handling or relative absence thereof of narco-terrorism. The nexus between narcotics trafficking and terror financing is well-documented: the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan-Iran-Pakistan) and the Golden Triangle (Myanmar-Laos-Thailand) have long been the financial engines of extremist violence. In India, drug seizures in Punjab and the Northeast point unmistakably to cross-border linkages involving hostile actors. Yet PRAHAAR does not articulate a dedicated, specialised strategy for disrupting these narco-terror pipelines. A more integrated mechanism linking anti-narcotics agencies, financial intelligence units and counter-terror forces is conspicuously absent.

The policy's treatment of crypto-currency and digital finance is similarly incomplete. While it acknowledges the use of crypto wallets and the dark web for terror financing, it does not specify how blockchain analysis will be operationalised, how India intends to coordinate with international crypto-currency exchanges, or how informal Hawala systems—still widely prevalent across South Asia will be systematically disrupted. These omissions are not trivial; they represent some of the most dynamic and rapidly evolving dimensions of modern terror financing.

On counter-radicalisation, the policy's engagement with the role of algorithms in amplifying extremist content is insufficient. Social media platforms operate on engagement-maximising algorithms that, by design, tend to amplify emotionally charged and polarising content—including extremist propaganda. PRAHAAR does not clearly outline how India will engage with major technology companies on content moderation, how AI-assisted tracking systems will be governed, or how encrypted messaging platforms and online gaming environments will be monitored without infringing on civil liberties. The Online Gaming Act 2025 is a start, but India's rapidly growing gaming population represents a largely under-regulated domain with genuine radicalisation and recruitment risks.

Perhaps the most strategically significant gap is the absence of a clear deterrence framework. PRAHAAR acknowledges that certain regional state actors use terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy. Yet the policy does not define thresholds for cross-border retaliation, articulate hybrid response strategies, or specify how the post-Operation Sindoor articulation of 'zero tolerance' translates into operational doctrine. Deterrence is only credible if adversaries believe the consequences of sponsoring terrorism are concrete and predictable. On this front, PRAHAAR remains deliberately and perhaps problematically ambiguous.

Geopolitical Context : Pakistan, China and the Neighbourhood

PRAHAAR does not exist in a vacuum. It takes shape against a specific geopolitical backdrop : a neighbourhood characterised by sustained Pakistani state sponsorship of cross-border terrorism, an increasingly assertive China that has repeatedly shielded designated terror entities at the United Nations Security Council and a volatile Myanmar whose internal collapse has created ungoverned spaces exploited by drug traffickers and armed groups with transnational linkages.

India's emphasis on international cooperation through MLATs, extradition treaties and UN engagement reflects a recognition that these challenges cannot be addressed bilaterally alone. However, the practical effectiveness of this

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multilateral approach will be tested by the reality that Pakistan continues to receive diplomatic cover from China and that international consensus on designating terror entities often falls prey to geopolitical manoeuvring. PRAHAAR's international engagement pillar is necessary but not, by itself, sufficient.

Living Doctrine or Static Document ?

The ultimate test of PRAHAAR will not be the comprehensiveness of its language on the page, but the adaptability of its implementation on the ground. Counter-terrorism policy that does not evolve becomes obsolete and terror networks are nothing if not adaptive. The drone threat that barely registered a decade ago is now a primary logistics and surveillance tool for armed groups along India's borders. AI-generated deepfakes and synthetic media are emerging as tools for disinformation campaigns that can incite communal violence. The next frontier—quantum computing's potential to break encryption standards is already on the horizon.

For PRAHAAR to remain relevant, it must be a living doctrine: subject to regular review, capable of incorporating emerging threat intelligence and responsive to technological change. This will require not just bureaucratic agility but genuine political will—the willingness to revisit assumptions, acknowledge failures and refine mechanisms even when doing so is politically uncomfortable.

Conclusion : A Foundation, not a Finish Line

PRAHAAR is a milestone. For the first time, India has a codified, comprehensive and publicly articulated national counter-terrorism doctrine one that integrates intelligence, law enforcement, legal safeguards, international diplomacy and societal resilience into a unified framework. Its seven-pillar structure is coherent; its acknowledgement of hybrid threats is timely; its emphasis on human rights and rule of law is commendable.

But a foundation is not a finish line. The gaps in narco-terror strategy, digital finance disruption, algorithm-aware counter-radicalisation and strategic deterrence are real and consequential. They are not criticisms that undermine the policy's value rather, they are the agenda for its next iteration. India's security environment will not wait for doctrine to catch up; the doctrine must be built to anticipate and adapt. Whether PRAHAAR becomes the cornerstone of a resilient, agile and effective national security architecture or fades into the long list of well-intentioned policy documents that outpaced implementation will depend on the political commitment to operationalise it fully, fund it adequately and revise it continuously. India's security and indeed its role as a responsible anchor of regional stability, rests in significant measure on getting that answer right.

Practice Question for Mains

Q. India's newly unveiled PRAHAAR doctrine represents a paradigm shift in counter-terrorism strategy. Critically analyse its seven-pillar framework, highlighting both its strengths and the gaps that need to be addressed for it to be an effective living doctrine. **(250 words)**

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Continued from Page 92

Such initiatives might include agreements on missile launch notifications, norms governing emerging technologies and confidence-building measures designed to preserve strategic stability.

Conclusion

The expiration of the New START treaty represents a watershed moment in the evolution of the global nuclear order. By removing the final legally binding constraints on the strategic arsenals of the United States and Russia, it marks the end of an era in which bilateral arms control served as the foundation of nuclear stability.

The immediate consequences include the loss of transparency, the potential for renewed arms competition and the weakening of the global non-proliferation regime. At the same time, the rapid expansion of China's nuclear capabilities is transforming the strategic landscape into a more complex multipolar system.

For the Indo-Pacific region, these developments create new challenges related to deterrence stability, alliance politics and crisis management. The erosion of traditional arms control frameworks increases uncertainty and may intensify strategic competition among major powers.

Nevertheless, nuclear stability is not solely dependent on formal treaties. Through innovative approaches such as voluntary transparency measures, strengthened crisis-communication mechanisms and multilateral risk-reduction initiatives, the international community can still preserve elements of strategic restraint.

In an increasingly complex nuclear environment, sustaining stability will require both political commitment and creative diplomacy. The challenge for policymakers is therefore not merely to replace New START but to develop a new architecture of cooperation capable of managing the realities of a multipolar nuclear world while preserving the core principles of global non-proliferation and strategic stability.

Practice Questions for Prelims :

Q.1. The primary purpose of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty was to :

(A) Eliminate all nuclear weapons globally

(B) Limit and verify strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia

(C) Prevent nuclear technology sharing for peaceful purposes

(D) Establish a nuclear-free zone in Europe

Ans. (B)

Q.2. Which of the following factors complicates the future of global arms control after the expiry of New START ?

(A) Decline of conventional weapons

(B) Emergence of a multipolar nuclear order involving the United States, Russia and China

(C) Complete disarmament by major nuclear powers

(D) Universal participation in arms control treaties

Ans. (B)

Practice Question for Mains

Q. Discuss the strategic implications of the end of the New START Treaty for global nuclear governance and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. **(250 words)**

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Important Concepts in News

ART AND CULTURE

Kurumba Painting

Reason for Discussion

Krishnan Raghavan, known by his pen name 'Kitna' was awarded the Padma Shri in 2026 posthumously, which recognized his immense contribution to Kurumba art, which is at risk as fewer than 10 practitioners are living today.

Key Highlights :

- The Kurumba painting is a pre-historic art form, estimated to be 3000 years old, which was traditionally drawn on rocks and in caves across the high hills of the Nilgiris.
- The art form is deeply tied to socio-religious life of Kurumba tribe in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Kurumba art depicts the life of Alu Kurumba, their marriage rituals, menarche ceremonies, funeral rituals and ancestral worship.
- The paintings use natural colours sourced from forests—yellow, brown and purple colour are obtained from Vengai tree trunk, Karimaram tree for obtaining black colour, green pigment is obtained from Pachaikeeda leaves, red sand is used to obtain red hue. Bamboo sticks, fine twigs and natural fiber brushes are used for application.
- The art features simple, linear motifs with dots, lines and geometric shapes. The theme of the painting revolves around spiritual beliefs, festivals, rituals and daily activities.

Krishnan Raghavan's Kurumba painting depicts the life of the Alu Kurumba community, categorized into three themes : social life, ritual life and daily life. Paintings focussed on the community's relationship with the flora and fauna of the Nilgiris, their cultivation practices and methods of rock honey hunting. Scholars today refer to his work as the 'Krishna school' of Kurumba art.

Threats and Way Forward

- Today, fewer than 10 indigenous practitioners of the Kurumba painting remain. Among them, only three have the knowledge of extracting natural colours.
- The State must reward existing artists to continue practicing the Kurumba painting, because limited income and recognition may hinder the younger generation to pursue the art form.
- Certified courses with stipend for learners can be introduced to increase the adoption of this art form.
- Krishnan Raghavan work can be collected to produce a visual anthropological record which can act as introduction for those who want to learn about the Kurumba art of painting.

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Practice Question for Prelims

Q. Which of the following is correct about Kurumba painting ?

(A) It is a pre-historic art form, estimated to be about 5000 years old.

(B) Krishnan Raghavan was awarded Padma Bhushan in 2026 for popularizing the Kurumba art form.

(C) The paintings use natural colours sourced from rocks and soils only.

(D) None of the above

Ans. (D)

POLITY AND LAW

No-Fault Liability

Reason for Discussion

On March 10, 2026, the Supreme Court directed the Union Government to formulate a 'no-fault' compensation policy for individuals who suffered serious adverse effects after receiving COVID vaccines.

No-Fault Liability is :

- The no-fault liability principle holds that individuals or entities are responsible for damages or injuries, regardless of whether they were at fault or negligent.
- Compensation is awarded based on the harm suffered, rather than who caused the damage.
- It simplifies the legal procedures for awarding compensation to victims by eliminating the need to prove fault.
- Indian laws already recognize the principle of no-fault liability, such as in third party car insurance policy, workers compensation, etc.
- No-Fault Liability is different from fault liability, which requires proving negligence or intent to cause harm, holding individuals accountable only if they are at fault.
- In countries like Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom, no fault liability is a standard feature of vaccine injury schemes.

Key Concepts in No-Fault Liability

- **Strict Liability :** The principle evolved from landmark English case, *Rylands Vs. Fletcher (1868).* The principle states that any person who keeps hazardous substances in his premises, is responsible for the damages caused by it's escape from the premises. The burden of proof lies on the defendant.
- **Absolute Liability :** In India, it evolved in the case of *M.C. Mehta Vs. Union of India* (1986). According to this principle, any harm caused due to dangerous and hazardous activity, then the person carrying out

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such activity will be held absolutely liable. It is stricter than the strict liability. This legal principle was followed by the Supreme Court in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy case.

Indian Laws-based on No-Fault Liability

- Section 140 of the Motor Vehicles Act, under which there is no need to prove wrongful act or negligence of the owner of the vehicle for claiming compensation for death or permanent disablement.
- The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991, mandates insurance for owners handling hazardous substances to provide immediate relief to victims of accidents, regardless of fault.
- Under Section 3 of the Employees' Compensation Act of 1923, employers provide compensation for employee injuries, deaths, or occupational diseases resulting from workplace accidents, irrespective of negligence or fault.

Practice Question for Mains

Q. What do you understand by No-Fault Liability? How it is different from Fault Liability ?

Essential Commodities Act, 1955

Reason for Discussion

Amid the prevailing situation in West Asia, the Union Government has recently invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to regulate the production, maintain supply, equitable distribution and availability of natural gas for priority sectors.

Essential Commodities Act, 1955 : Key Highlights

- Enacted in 1955, the Act empowers the Union Government to control the production, supply and distribution of, and trade and commerce, with an aim to prevent the disruption of supply of essential goods due to supply shocks, hoarding or speculation.
- Section 3 of the Act empowers the Central Government to regulate or prohibit the production, supply, distribution, and trade of essential commodities to maintain supply and ensure fair prices. It allows for fixing prices, imposing stock limits, and controlling storage or transport, particularly during shortages.
- Section 5 of the Act empowers the Union government to delegate its powers under Section 3 to state governments or authorised officers, enabling enforcement at the grassroots.
- Section 7 of the Act prescribes penalties for violating control orders made under Section 3, including imprisonment (3 months to 7 years), fines and forfeiture of property/vehicles. Specific violations involving certain licenses or declarations may incur up to one year imprisonment.
- In June 2020, the Centre amended the Act to delist certain commodities as essential, allowing the government to regulate their supply and prices only 'under extraordinary circumstances' such as war, famine, extraordinary price rise and a natural calamity of grave nature. These delisted commodities are : food items, including cereals, pulses, potatoes, onions, edible oilseeds and oils.
- The amended act can only be imposed if there is a 100% increase in retail prices of horticultural produce and a 50% increase in the retail prices of non-perishable agricultural food items. However, food stocks held for domestic public distribution are exempted from this restriction.
- In the recent past, it has been invoked to manage shortages of wheat, sugar and pulses. During the COVID-19 lockdown, it was invoked to prevent hoarding, black marketing and profiteering of a range of goods.

Present Order : Key Highlights

- Based on the average gas consumptions levels over past six months, and subject to their availability, four categories of priorities have been identified for the receipt of natural gas :
  1. Domestic PNG for household supply has been assigned top priority and will receive 100% of their average gas consumption of the last six months. CNG used by the transport sector, natural gas used for LPG production and gas consumed for essential pipeline operations are also part of this category.
  2. Fertilizer units (second priority) will receive 70% of their average gas consumption of the past six months, with prohibition on use for any other purpose. Tea industries, manufacturing and other industrial consumers supplied through the national gas grid (third priority) will receive 80% of their six-month average consumption as supply. Commercial and industrial consumers of city gas distribution companies comprise the fourth category, entitled to get 80% of their six-month average use.
- Oil refineries have been ordered to increase their LPG production towards domestic LPG use. 25-day inter-booking period has also been introduced to avoid hoarding.
- Of the imported LPG supplies, distribution is being prioritised towards essential non-domestic sectors such as hospitals and educational institutions. A committee of three executive directors from oil marketing companies has been constituted to review the representations for LPG supply to restaurants/hotels/other industries.

Practice Question for Mains

Q. Explain the salient features of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. How it helps the Union Government to realize the goals of inclusive and welfare society ?

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Peptide Therapy

Reason for Discussion

In recent times, peptide therapy has been gaining attention due to its increasing applicability in improving health, appearance and performance.

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Peptide Therapeutics is :

- In peptide therapy, peptide molecules are utilized for mimicking the human body's natural signals and for sending targeted signals/instructions to certain cells.
- As compared to conventional drugs, peptide molecules are better tolerated by the human body, as these compounds resembles the substance already produced by the human body.
- Designed to influence particular biological processes in the human body, the peptide molecules act on specific targets.
- They are injected in the human body (not given orally) to prevent its breakdown in the human digestive system.

Applications :

- **Metabolic Diseases :** GLP-1–based peptide drugs help in regulating blood sugar and obesity.
- **Oncology :** Peptide molecule's ability to target tumor receptors or deliver drug directly to cancerous cells have made them account for significant share of peptide drug research in oncology.
- **Endocrinology :** Peptide therapies are useful in conditions such as infertility, growth disorders and thyroid disorders.
- **Regenerative Medicine :** Experimental peptides are being explored for stimulating tissue repair in muscles, tendons and nerves.
- Peptides influencing immune responses are being studied for inflammatory diseases and viral infections. They are also being studied in dermatology, wound healing, osteoporosis and cardiovascular diseases.

Risks and Way Out

- Rising popularity of peptide molecules for anti-ageing, fitness and biohacking has led to over-marketing and misuse.
- Many peptide molecules, being promoted online, suffers from limited or no-human clinical trial. Several products labelled as 'research chemicals' may contain impurities or incorrect dosing, which is risk to human health.
- Various risks associated with unregulated or improper use are : metabolic disturbances, endocrine imbalance or cardiovascular risks.
- Before initiating peptide-based treatment, it is important to consult medical practitioners about safety, research evidence and possible side effects of peptide therapies.

Practice Question for Prelims

Q. Which of the following statements is incorrect ?

(A) Peptide molecules can mimic human body's natural signals.

(B) Peptide molecules are better tolerated by human body.

(C) They can be used for treating obesity and high blood sugar.

(D) They are given orally to prevent breakdown in human digestive system.

Ans. (D)

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Dark Oxygen

Reason for Discussion

Scientists exploring the Pacific Ocean floor have reported the presence of 'dark oxygen' in an environment where sunlight does not reach.

What is Dark Oxygen ?

- The term 'Dark Oxygen' refers to oxygen detected in deep ocean regions where sunlight is completely absent.
- On the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ), which spans 4·5 million sq. km (1·7 million square miles) in the Pacific Ocean, there are coal-like mineral rocks, called polymetallic nodules, which typically contain manganese and iron. Scientists have found that these nodules produce oxygen without the process of photosynthesis.
- The scientists have observed that the oxygen concentrations in certain sealed deep-sea nodules increased over time, even in the absence of light.

Scientific Impact of the Discovery

- Scientists may need to rethink about global oxygen cycles if they can be found in dark, deep-sea environments.
- The discovery signifies that other extreme environments could have similar process where oxygen can be produced without photosynthesis.
- This discovery also highlights the need to protect environments that self-produce oxygen.
- In November 2023, Nature reported that deep-sea mining for minerals could harm deep-sea jellyfish, according to the first study of mining impacts on animals living in the water column.

Practice Question for Prelims

Q. Identify the incorrect statement.

(A) Dark Oxygen are produced in extreme environment such as ocean and seabed.

(B) They are produced without the process of photosynthesis.

(C) Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ) is in Indian Ocean

(D) Polymetallic nodules produce oxygen.

Ans. (C)

DEFENCE

Precision Strike Missile

Reason for Discussion

According to the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), the United States used Precision Strike Missiles (PrSMs) for the first time during its ongoing war with Iran.

What is Precision Strike Missile ?

- Surface-to-surface weapon system, capable of striking targets 60-500 km away (medium to long-range).
- They are next-generation, long range precision-strike missile, produced by Lockheed Martin's Missiles and Fire Control division.

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- As part of the US Army's Long Range Precision Fires Initiative, its development began in 2016 and the first delivery was made in 2023.
- It aims to replace the ageing Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), with lower radar visibility, reduced maintenance and greater compatibility with existing weapon systems such as HIMARS and MLRS.

Key Features :

- They are powered by rocket and guided by a GPS-supported inertial navigation system.
- The design is sleeker (length- 4m, diameter- 43 cm, weight-817 kg), allowing the launchers to carry two missiles, instead of one.
- It features 'open systems architecture', facilitating easier to plug in new components, upgrade or to be used with other systems.
- The 'IM Energetic' payload facilitates making explosion safer- warheads' explosives that are less likely to blow up accidentally if hit by fire.
- It is compatible with MLRS M270 and HIMARS family of launchers.

Four Increments of Precision Strike Missile

- **First Increment :** Standard system currently used by the US and Australia.
- **Second Increment :** Anti-ship missile system, with range up to 1000 km.
- **Third Increment :** It will specialise in destroying fortifications and launching specialised drones and glide bombs.
- **Fourth Increment :** It aims to extend range beyond 1000 km.

The fifth increment which is under consideration, aims to have an autonomous launch vehicle.

Practice Question for Prelims

Q. Identify the correct statement :

(A) Precision Strike Missile is surface-to-surface system

(B) Its development began in 2016

(C) It is compatible with MLRS M270 and HIMARS family of launchers

(D) All of the above

Ans. (D)

GEOGRAPHY

Moist Heatwaves

Reason for Discussion

According to the findings of the January 2026 study by scientists from IMD and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) Pune, explaining the precise mechanism of 'moist heatwaves', these waves have direct implications for early warning, public health and climate preparedness.

Moist Heatwave is :

- They are triggered by the combined effect of high temperatures and elevated humidity levels in atmosphere.
- When air is already humid, sweat cannot evaporate from skin, leaving the body unable to cool itself. This can lead to heat exhaustion and fatal heatstroke within hours.

Mechanism Intensifying Moist Heatwaves

- The Rosby waves, originating in Europe's west coast, arrive over India as upper-air high pressure systems, suppressing clouds and warming the surface.
- In addition, the arrival of the circulation pattern generated by anomalous warming in southernmost Bay of Bengal in the northwest India, gets super-rimposed with Rosby waves and amplify it.
- The anti-cyclonic conditions get strengthened, which lingers longer and at the same time, pumps moisture westward in India. Hence, the fatal combination of heat and humidity is created.

Role of Monsoon in Shifting Moist Heat-waves

According to research published in journal 'Climate Dynamics' :

- When the monsoon brings heavy rain, northern India faces the risk of moist heat. As the rain subsides during dry spells, this danger shifts to the southern and eastern parts of the country.
- This happens because northern India is normally dry, so monsoon moisture pushes humidity to dangerous levels. In the south and east, humidity is already high, so dry spells and clear sky conditions trap heat instead.
- They are connected to large-scale weather events such as the Boreal Summer Intraseasonal Oscillation which is a 30–90-day pattern of the movement of active convection or stormy weather from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific Ocean between June and September.

Health Impact and Way Forward

- The moist heatwaves impair evaporation, limiting the human body's ability to dissipate metabolic heat and regulate core temperature.
- In such circumstances, the physiological strain on the human body intensifies, exacerbating the risks of cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses. A thermo-regulatory failure can lead to hyperthermia, heat exhaustion and fatal heatstroke in extreme cases.
- Over a billion people in India face this threat, particularly agricultural workers, labourers and elderly people.
- Advance warnings of moist heatwaves creates real opportunities to prepare and protect people, such as to allow hospitals to increase staffing before moist heat-related admissions rise, enable city authorities to open cooling centres and adjust school hours and help power grid operators manage infrastructure strain.

Practice Question for Mains

Q. What do you understand by Moist Heatwaves ? Discuss its mechanism and role of monsoon in shifting the moist heatwaves.

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Compendium

Indian Polity and Constitution

✶ The proportion of indirectly elected members of the State Legislative Council is **—5/6th**

✶ Duties of the Chief Minister towards the Governor has been specified under **—Article 167**

✶ Power of Parliament to legislate for two or more States by consent has been provided under **—Article 252**

✶ The President of India gives his resignation to **—The Vice President**

✶ The charge of impeachment against the President can be preferred by **—Both the Houses of Parliament**

✶ The Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog holds the rank and status of **—Cabinet Minister in the Government of India**

✶ A person who is not a member of either Rajya Sabha or Lok Sabha, can be appointed as the minister for the maximum period of **—Six months**

✶ The word 'Cabinet', inserted by the 44th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1978, has been mentioned only once in the Constitution in **—Article 352(3)**

✶ The Chairman and members of the State Public Service Commission are appointed by **—Governor**

✶ Apart from Chairman, the maximum members in Lokpal can be **—Eight**

Indian National Movement

✶ The Governor-General of Bengal was made the Governor-General of India by **—Charter Act, 1833**

✶ The prime architects of introducing Ryotwari system in India were **—Alexander Reed and Thomas Munro**

✶ Who is the author of the book 'Desher Katha', which became popular during the Swadeshi movement ? **—Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar**

✶ Which movement of Gandhiji targeted *Teen-Kathia* system ? **—Champaran Satyagraha**

✶ In which year, the All India Home Rule League changed its name to Swaraj Sabha ? **—1920**

✶ One of the objectives of the Delhi War Conference 1918 was **—To recruit Indians in the army**

✶ Name the translations of Sanskrit hymns and lyrics written by Mahatma Gandhi **—Songs from Prison**

✶ The Harijan Sevak Sangh was founded by Gandhiji in which year ? **—1932**

✶ Who started Urdu-daily 'Vande Mataram' from Lahore ? **—Lala Lajpat Rai**

✶ Gandhiji withdrew Rowlatt Satyagraha after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and termed it as **—Himalayan Blunder**

History and Culture of India

✶ Which mudra of Gautam Buddha symbolizes his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree ? **—Bhumisparsha Mudra**

✶ Ellora caves, Ajanta caves and Mahabalipuram sculptures are examples of **—Rock-cut sculptures**

✶ In Mathura art, the Buddhists and Jain sculptures were primarily made of **—Red Sandstone**

✶ Khajuraho temples, built during the 9th and 11th centuries, are associated with **—Chandela dynasty**

✶ Which pillar provides information about Ashoka's visit to Lumbini ? **—Rummindei Pillar**

✶ Yaksha picture from Parkam and the Yakshini figure from Besnagar are associated with **—Mauryan Dynasty**

✶ The Lomas Rishi cave was patronized for which sect ? **—Ajeevika sect**

✶ Which Buddhist mudra is associated with charity, compassion and boon-granting ? **—Varada Mudra**

✶ *Khaza'in ul-Futuh* describes the war expeditions of which Delhi Sultan ? **—Allaudin Khilji**

✶ According to the Naneghat inscription, which Satavahana King performed two Ashwamedha Yagya ? **—Satakarni I**

Economic Affairs of India

✶ What is the total central assistance of the Urban Challenge Fund ? **—₹ 1 Lakh crore**

✶ The 'Achiever' states (major states) in Fiscal Health Index 2026 are **—Odisha, Goa and Jharkhand**

✶ As per the new GDP series, what is the revised Fiscal Deficit (as % of GDP) for 2024-25 ? **—4·9%**

✶ The minimum support price for raw jute for 2026-27 season has been fixed at **—₹ 5,925 per quintal**

✶ Recently, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved enhanced delegation to which Maharatna company ? **—Powergrid**

✶ What is the total corpus of Startup India Fund of Funds 2·0 ? **—₹ 10,000 Crore**

✶ Bharat Taxi, India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform, is registered under **—Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002**

✶ In 2025, India's tea export was **—280·40 million kg**

✶ The base year of the Merchandise Trade Index has been revised from FY 2012-13 to **—FY2022-23**

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✶ Which scheme has been recently launched for cashless treatment of road accident victims ?
—PM RAHAT

Geography (India and the World)

✶ Gurudongmar Lake is located in which State ?
—Sikkim

✶ Gandikota canyon in Kadapa District of Andhra Pradesh, has been carved out from **—Pennar River**

✶ In the southern hemisphere, the longest day occur on **—December 21 or 22**

✶ Didwana is the Salt Lake located in which State of India ? **—Rajasthan**

✶ Hundru Falls in Ranchi is located on which river ?
—Subarnarekha

✶ Flat-topped isolated volcanic under-water mountains are known as **—Guyots**

✶ Juan De Fuca Ridge system is located in
—Pacific Ocean

✶ The most variable content in the Earth's atmosphere is **—Water Vapour**

✶ Who postulated the Ice Crystal Theory associated with precipitation ? **—Tor Bergeron**

✶ The San Andreas Fault of California is which type of plate boundary ? **—Transform Boundary**

Science & Technology

✶ Per and polyfluoroalkyl substances are known as
—Forever chemicals

✶ Bacterial communication relying on autoinducers are known as **—Quorum Sensing**

✶ ExoMiner++ is a deep-learning AI model for detecting exoplanets have been developed by
—NASA

✶ Bacillus subtilis has been declared 'State Microbe' by
—Kerala

✶ Noise made by aircraft travelling faster than the speed of sound is known as **—Sonic Boom**

✶ Crystals of Molybdenum Disulfide are
—Hexagonal layered structure

✶ HbA1c test is used to measure **—Blood Glucose**

✶ Lymphatic Filariasis is a vector borne disease transmitted by (in urban areas)**—Female Culex Mosquito**

✶ Proteins which lack a fixed 3-D structure in biological conditions are known as
—Intrinsically Disordered Proteins

✶ The life-long mix of environmental and chemical exposures that drive most diseases is known as
—Human Exposome

Agriculture and Allied Sectors

✶ As per the Second Advance Estimates of Annual GDP for 2025-26, the GVA of Agriculture & Allied Sector is estimated at **—₹ 52,08,800 crore**

✶ 'Reimagining Agriculture : A Roadmap for Frontier Technology Led Transformation' report has been released by **—NITI Aayog**

✶ What is the estimated Kharif foodgrain production as per the 2nd Advanced Estimate for 2025-26 ?
—1741·44 LMT

✶ A Centre of Excellence for Murrel has been approved under PMMSYT in
—Mancherial district, Telangana

✶ Sahiwal, Gir, Tharparkar, Gangatiri etc. are breeds of
—Cows

✶ CSIR–Central Food Technological Research Institute (CSIR–CFTRI) is located at **—Mysuru, Karnataka**

✶ Under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, the maximum sum insured for Kharif crops is **—2%**

✶ Purple Blotch, a fungal disease of onion, is caused by
—Alternaria porri

✶ Which component of the fertilizer is used for stimulating early growth in plants ? **—Nitrogen**

✶ Anthrax affects which internal organ of cattle and sheep ? **—Spleen**

Environment, Biodiversity, Climate Change etc.

✶ The theme of the World Wildlife Day 2026 was
—Medicinal and Aromatic Plants : Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods

✶ The 89th meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) was held in
—Bhopal

✶ Which platform has been launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for strengthening institutional coordination ?
—NIRANTAR

✶ Kopra Jalashay is the Ramsar site, located in
—Chhattisgarh

✶ IUCN Red List is popularly known as
—Barometer of Life

✶ The layer in a lake that receives sufficient sunlight, allowing for photosynthesis is known as
—Limnetic Zone

✶ Gases primarily responsible for the formation of the brown haze dome are
—Nitrogen oxide (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs)

✶ The transfer of public revenue between governments within a country based on ecological indicators is known as **—Ecological Fiscal Transfers**

✶ Total amount of organic matter produced by photosynthesis over a period of time is referred as
—Gross Primary Productivity

✶ Animals which are adapted to live or thrive in desert ecosystem is known as **—Xerocole**

Communication and Teaching & Research Aptitude

✶ The collaborative ideation method used to generate a large volume of ideas, solutions, or concepts for a

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specific problem, usually within a group setting, is known as **—Brainstorming**

✶ Assessing the effectiveness of an existing programme, policy, product or intervention is known as **—Evaluative Research**

✶ In the classroom communication, differentiation between the acceptance and non-acceptance of certain stimuli forms the basis of **—Selective Communication**

✶ Assessment of individual's performance against a peer group is known as **—Norm-referenced test**

✶ Teacher task orientation and instructional variety are key behaviours in **—Effective Teaching**

✶ Ameliorating the ongoing conditions and practices is the focus of **—Action Research**

✶ Wider spectrum of ideas and issues may be made possible in which type of arrangement ? **—Conference**

✶ Which type of zone is created between the interaction of students and teachers ? **—Zone of Proximal Development**

✶ A structured activity used in communication to initiate conversation, relieve social tension and build rapport among participants is known as **—Ice breaker**

✶ A communication which primarily serves to establish or maintain social relationships is known as **—Phatic Expression**

Sports and Games

✶ Which country will host the 10th FIFA Women World Cup in 2027 ? **—Brazil**

✶ In football, the area between the opponent's 20-yard line and goal line is known as **—Red Zone**

✶ India's first-ever Chess Grand Master from the North East Region is **—Mayank Chakraborty**

✶ Which domestic cricket team of India won the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025-26 ? **—Vidarbha**

✶ Which country won the SAFF U-19 Women's 2026 title ? **—India**

✶ Who won the Women's Single title at the Australia Open 2026 ? **—Elena Rybakina**

✶ Recently, which Indian female badminton player announced her retirement ? **—Saina Nehwal**

✶ The Gulab Rai Chaddha Cup is associated with which sports ? **—Badminton**

✶ An ice hockey field is also called as **—Ice Rink**

✶ Who won the Men's Singles title of the All-England Open Badminton Championships 2026 ? **—Lin Chun-yi**

Miscellany

✶ The Hindu Kush-Himalayan-Tibetan Plateau region is also known as **—The Third Pole**

✶ The Corruption Perceptions Index 2025 was released by **—Transparency International**

✶ The UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) secretariat is headquartered in **—Bonn, Germany**

✶ The World Wildlife Day is annually observed on **—March 3**

✶ Which convention is related with hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade ? **—Rotterdam Convention**

✶ Who has been recently appointed as the Chairman of the GIFT City ? **—Uday Kotak**

✶ What is India's rank in the Network Readiness Index 2025 ? **—45th**

✶ Which Constitutional Amendment Act is also known as the 'Mini-Constitution' ? **—42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976**

✶ The ex-officio Chairman of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) is **—The Prime Minister**

✶ The Competition Commission of India was established in **—2003**

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6. **Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)** : SPI analyzes rainfall deficits or surpluses over various timescales to identify potential drought conditions.
7. **Vegetation Condition Index (VCI) / Crop Condition Index** : It interprets the state of vegetation relative to historical data to estimate yield prospects.

These products are integrated by Agro-Meteorological Field Units (AMFUs) to create actionable, localized advisories for farming communities.

Impact of Space-based Monitoring System on Indian Agriculture

The use of space-based agricultural monitoring systems has shown positive impact in terms of :

- Improved estimation of crop acreage and production.
- Identification of suitable areas for crop and horticulture expansion.
- Agriculture drought monitoring for timely reporting.
- Improved risk assessment and claim settlement in crop insurance through objective satellite-based methodologies.
- Space technology intervention in YES-TECH of PMFBY led to decrease in premium rate from 17% to 12%.

Development of space based technologies is of utmost importance for Indian Agriculture. However, their application is not so simple as it is clamed, because poor level of scientific knowledge among the vast section of the farming community. The dissemination of these technics is of critical importance. The system of agricultural development, either through the Block development Officers (BDOs) or District Agriculture Officers is either paralysed or defunct in most of the districts of the country. Modern techniques of farming are being adopted by the handful of farmers. An approach of mass dissemination of these techniques should be applied in the same manner as those were applied to popularise the modern methods of farming under Green Revolution.

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Prominent Historical Personalities of India



Thiruvalluvar

Thiruvalluvar flourished around two thousand years ago in Mylapore, present-day Chennai. According to some traditions, he was born in Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas, between the 4th century BCE and the early 6th century CE. Scholar Maraimalai Adigal dated his birth to 31 BCE, whereas Tamil scholar Kamil Zvelebil suggested that Thiruvalluvar and the Thirukkural likely belonged to the period between 500 and 600 CE. In January 1935, the Tamil Nadu government officially recognised 31 BCE as the birth year of Thiruvalluvar.



Thiruvalluvar

Thiruvalluvar, a born Siddha and poet, is considered one of the greatest poet-philosophers of the Sangam period. His magnum opus, the *Thirukkural*, deals with morality, governance, economics and love. It is admired for its universal values and ethical clarity.

The *Thirukkural*, a set of 1,330 couplets thematically divided into 133 chapters (each containing 10 couplets), is widely regarded as a secular tome. The text is divided into three major sections : Aram (Morality), Porul (materialism) and Inbam (love). These divisions comprise 38 chapters on morality, 70 on materialism and 25 on love.

The topic of love (Inbam) is classified into two modes: *Kalaviyal*, which refers to pre-marital love and subsequently tied to marriage without any ceremony; and *Karpiyal*, which refers to traditional marital love.

Thirukkural emphasises moral conduct and speaks of the realities of human life. He discouraged divisions based on religion, caste, creed and race and asserted instead that morality and kindness are indispensable for a meaningful human life. For elevating human life and social well-being, he outlined several virtues such as love, compassion and charity.

His reflection on importance of education bears resemblance with Plato. According to Thiruvalluvar, virtue, wisdom and education are three inseparable entities. A virtuous man is one who has received proper education. According to him, the ultimate purpose of knowledge and education is the betterment of human life. Human emancipation through love, benevolence and ethical action was his one of the major concerns in his work. Emphasizing the importance of *karma*, he prioritized activity over inactivity individuals gain opportunities to discern right from wrong through actions.

Thiruvalluvar is regarded by many as an incarnation of Brahma. Through his life and teachings, he demonstrated that renunciation of family life was not necessary for achieving spiritual excellence.

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Saint Thirumankai Alvar

The 12th and the last of the Alvar saints, Thirumangai Alvar was born as Kaliyan in 8th Century CE in Tamil Nadu. He was the skilled archer and served as the military commander under the Chola empire.

Considered as one of the most learned Alvars, he is also known as *Narkavi Perumal* and wrote more than 1300 verses. These verses are part of Divya Prabandham. Some of his important works are : *Periya Thirumozhi*, *Thirunedunthandakam* and *Thirukkuruthandakam*.

He played a pivotal role in the enrichment of the Srirangam Ranganathaswamy Temple, where he is credited with constructing one of the major fortified walls. He helped establish Srirangam as the foremost of the 108 Divya Desams (Lord Vishnu temples).

Considered as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu's *Sharanga Bow*, his teachings and life highlight the theme of transformation from materialism to spiritualism through bhakti.

The term 'Alvars' refers to a group of twelve ancient Tamil poet-saints (including woman saint Andal) who were devoted to the worship of Lord Vishnu and his incarnation. The Alvars lived between the 5th and 9th centuries CE and played a significant role in the development and spread of the Bhakti movement, particularly the Vaishnavism tradition. Their works are compiled in the *Naalayira Divya Prabandham*, a collection of 4,000 verses, which is considered a holy scripture in the Tamil Vaishnavite tradition.

Uda Devi Pasi

Uda Devi was a warrior in the Indian Revolt of 1857, who fought against the British East India Company. She was born in a small village in Awadh, Uttar Pradesh. She was married to Makka Pasi who was a soldier in the army of Begum Hazrat Mahal.

During the Revolt of 1857, she reached out to Begum Hazrat Mahal to enlist in army. In order to prepare for the battle that was headed their way, the Begum helped her form a women's battalion under her command.

Uda Devi took part in the Battle in Sikandar Bagh in November 1857. After issuing instructions to her battalion, she climbed up a Pipal tree and began shooting at advancing British soldiers. A British officer noted that many of the casualties had bullet wounds indicating steep, downward trajectory. Suspecting a hidden sniper, he ordered his officers to fire at the trees and dislodged a rebel who fell to the ground dead.

Upon investigation, the sniper was revealed as Uda Devi. William Forbes-Mitchell, in Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny, writes of Uda Devi : "She was armed with

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a pair of heavy old-pattern cavalry pistols, one of which was in her belt still loaded and her pouch was still about half full of ammunition, while from her perch in the tree, which had been carefully prepared before the attack, she had killed more than half-a-dozen men."

Lala Lajpat Rai

Lala Lajpat Rai was an Indian revolutionary politician and author, widely recognized as *Punjab Kesari*. He is remembered for his courageous leadership in the protest against the Simon Commission and for playing an instrumental role in establishing the nationalist journal 'The People' to uplift public opinion.



Lala Lajpat Rai

He was born on 28 January, 1865 to Radha Kishan (father) and Gulab Devi (mother) in present-day Punjab in India. In 1886, he qualified as a lawyer and established his practice at Hissar (present-day Haryana.) He also founded the Hisar district branch of the Indian National Congress and reformist Arya Samaj. In 1886, he played key role in establishing the DAV College Trust and Management Society, following the death of Swami Dayanand. The first DAV school, with Mahatma Hansraj as the principal, was established in Lahore in 1886. In 1914, he quit law practice to dedicate himself to the freedom of India.

For his growing involvement in the agrarian agitation in Punjab, he was awarded the toughest prison sentences in Mandalay (now Myanmar) in 1907 without trial. At the Banaras Congress Session in December 1905, Lalaji vehemently opposed the repressive measures adopted by the Government to suppress the agitation in Bengal. In the aftermath of partition of Bengal, the Lal-Bal-Pal had come to symbolize the 'Trinity of Indian Politics'. He also led the protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

In recognition of his outstanding role in the freedom movement, he was elected President of the Indian National Congress at the Calcutta session (1920). He was also elected as the President of the All-India Trade Union Congress in 1920. He established the Servants of the People Society in Lahore in 1921.

Gifted with a perceptive mind, he was a prolific writer and authored several works like–'Unhappy India', 'Young India : An Interpretation', 'History of Arya Samaj', 'England's Debt to India' and a series of popular biographies on Mazzini, Garibaldi and Swami Dayanand. As a visionary and man with a mission, he was closely associated with the establishment of the Punjab National Bank, the Lakshmi Insurance Company and the Servants of the Peoples Society at Lahore.

When the Simon Commission visited Lahore on 30 October, 1928, Lajpat Rai led a non-violent march in protest against it. The superintendent of police, James A. Scott, ordered the police to lathi (baton) charge the protesters and personally assaulted Rai. He did not fully recover from his injuries and died on 17 November, 1928.

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Durgabai Deshmukh

Durgabai Deshmukh (also known as G. Durgabai) was born on 15th July, 1909, in Rajahmundri, Kakinada. At the age of 14, she volunteered at a conference held by the Indian National Congress in Kakinada.



Durgabai Deshmukh

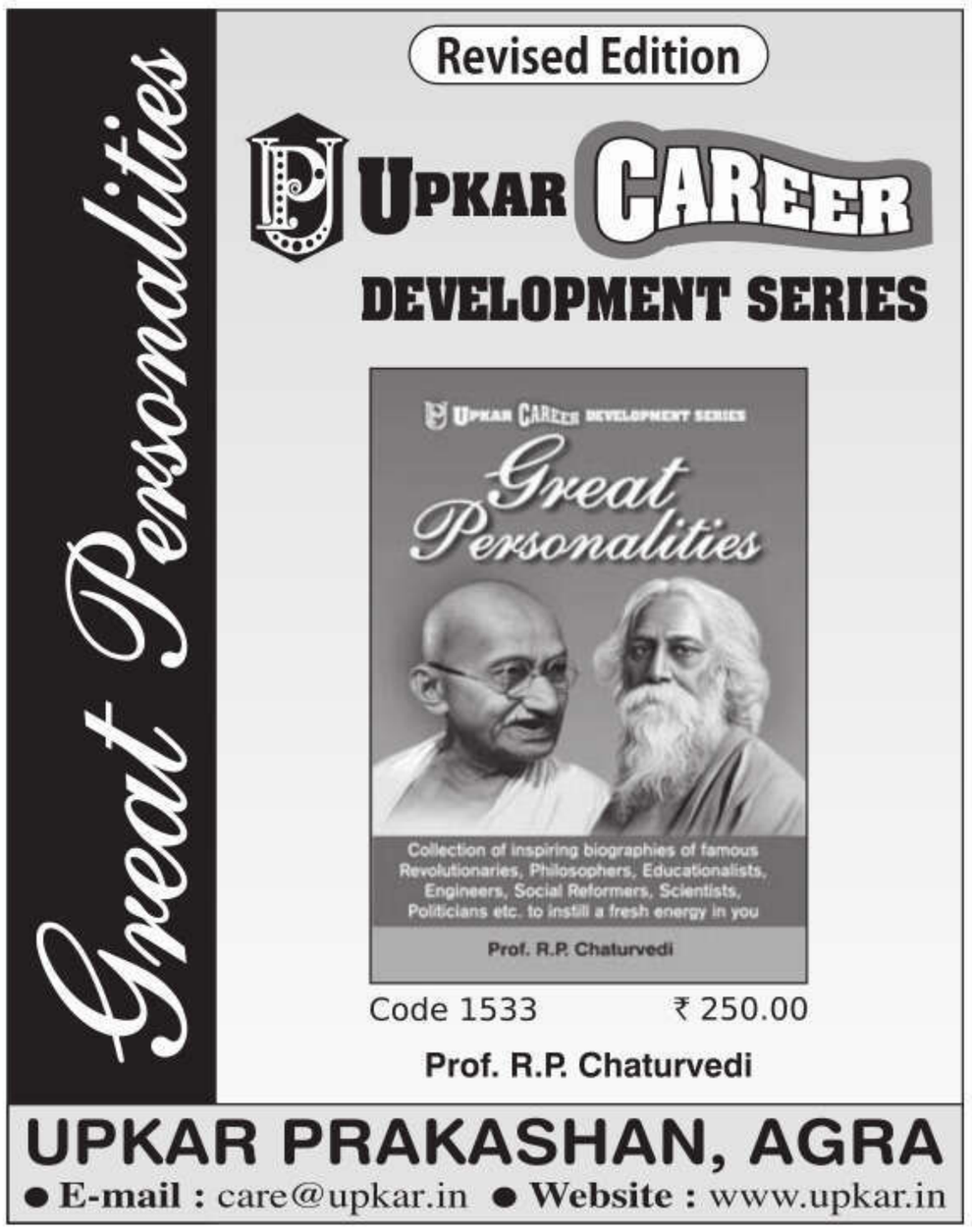
In May 1930, she participated in the Salt Satyagraha in Madras and was imprisoned in 1930 and 1932. In 1936, she established Andhra Mahila Sabha to coach young Telugu girls in Madras for their Matriculation examination conducted by the Banaras Hindu University. Durgabai founded and edited a Telugu journal called *Andhra Mahila.*

Durgabai was elected to the Constituent Assembly from the Madras Province. She made several key interventions on issues that include the national language, judicial independence and human trafficking.

After Independence, she was a part of key national organizations like the Central Social Welfare Board and the National Council for Women's Education. She was also a member of the Planning Commission. In 1958, she headed the National Committee on Girls' and Women's Education.

Durgabai was awarded the Nehru Literary Award in 1971 for her contribution to the promotion of literacy in India. She was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 1975. The Central Social Welfare Board instituted a yearly award in her name to recognize voluntary organisations for outstanding contribution to women's welfare and empowerment. She passed away on 9th May, 1981.

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Current Objective Questions

Trade And Industry

1. Base Year of National Accounts has been revised from 2011-12 to :
   (A) 2021-22 (B) 2022-23
   (C) 2023-24 (D) 2024-25

2. Real GDP in second advance estimates of FY 2025-26 is estimated to grow by :
   (A) 7·6 per cent
   (B) 7·5 per cent
   (C) 7·4 per cent
   (D) 7·3 per cent

3. In Second advance estimates of FY 2025–26 nominal GDP is estimated to rise by :
   (A) 8·4 per cent
   (B) 8·5 per cent
   (C) 8·6 per cent
   (D) 8·7 per cent

4. Consider the following statements in relation to % share at constant prices of sub-sectors in the revised series of the GVA with base year 2022-23 :
   I. Share of agriculture and allied services in GVA is 19·74%.
   II. Share of industry is 27·61%.
   III. Share of services is 52·64%.
   IV. Share of Trade, Hotel, Transport and warehousing is 14·33%.

   How many statements given above are correct ?
   (A) Only one
   (B) Only two
   (C) Only three
   (D) All four

5. Growth rate of Real Gross Value Added in FY 2025-26 (II AE) was highest in which sector of Indian economy ?
   (A) Manufacturing
   (B) Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication and services related to Broadcasting
   (C) Financial, Real Estate and Professional Services
   (D) Construction

6. Which of the following statements is/are correct ?
   I. Paddy is a water-intensive crop with a water footprint estimated at 3,000-5,000 litres per kg.
   II. Paddy's sustained higher production, especially in stressed states such as Punjab and Haryana with declining water tables, deepens ecological stress.

   Correct code is :
   (A) Only I
   (B) Only II
   (C) Both I and II
   (D) Neither I nor II

7. Consider the following statements in relation to India's foodgrain buffer stocks.
   I. India's buffer requirement of foodgrains is 21·41 million tonnes as of January 2026.
   II. Central stocks of rice and wheat stood at nearly 59·25 million tonnes which is 178 per cent of buffer requirements (as on 27.1.2026).
   III. Food subsidy is the largest expenditure head of the Union government.

   Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
   (A) Only I and II
   (B) Only II and III
   (C) Only I and III
   (D) All I, II and III

8. Which of the following statements is/are correct about India's Current Account Deficit ?
   I. India's current account deficit (CAD) widened to $13·2 billion, or 1·3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), in the October-December quarter (Q3FY26).
   II. India's CAD stood at $ 11·3 billion, or 1·1 per cent of GDP, in Q3FY25.

   Correct code is :
   (A) Only I
   (B) Only II
   (C) Both I and II
   (D) Neither I nor II

9. Consider the following facts about the Strait of Hormuz :
   I. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow waterway between Iran to the north, and Oman and UAE in South.
   II. It connects the Persian Gulf in the north to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea in the south.
   III. At its narrowest point, the strait of Hormuz is about 33 km wide.
   IV. The shipping lanes used by tankers are only about 3 km wide in each direction.
   V. Despite lying within the territorial waters of Iran and Oman, it is considered an international waterway open to global shipping.

   How many statements given above are correct ?
   (A) Only two
   (B) Only three
   (C) Only four
   (D) All five

10. Which of the following statements is/are correct in relation to Labour force Participation rate ?
    I. India's female labour force participation rate stood at 32 per cent in 2024.
    II. Around 78 per cent of women in the Indian labour force are in vulnerable employment, compared with 69 per cent of men.
    III. Vulnerable employment often lacks formal contracts, adequate social security, decent working conditions and trade union representation.

    How many statements given above are correct ?
    (A) Only one
    (B) Only two
    (C) All three
    (D) None of the above

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11. Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has decided the following rate of interest on Employees' Provident Fund for FY 2025-26 :
(A) 8·10% (B) 8·15%
(C) 8·25% (D) 8·50%

12. Consider the following statements in relation to petroleum economy :
I. India is the world's third-largest oil importer in the world.
II. India is the world's fourth-biggest refiner.
III. India is the world's seventh-largest exporter of refined petroleum products.
How many statements given above are correct ?
(A) Only one
(B) Only two
(C) All three
(D) None of the above

13. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the SWAYATT ?
(A) It is a flagship initiative of Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority(APEDA)
(B) SWAYATT is an acronym for–Startups, Women and Youth Advantage through e-Transactions
(C) It is commitment to making public procurement more inclusive for startups, women entrepreneurs and youth across India.
(D) It was launched on 19 February, 2019

14. Which of the following statements is correct about the 'Korea 5% Model' that was in the news recently ?
I. The Model works through the spirit of Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari.
II. Under the Aawa Paani Jhoki movement, farmers voluntarily set aside 5% of their agricultural land to construct small recharge ponds and terraced pits.
III. Women emerged as 'Neer Nayikas', while the Youth volunteers, known as 'Jal Doots'under this model.
IV. By giving just 5% of their land, communities secured 100% of their water future.
How many statements given above are correct ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

15. River lighthouses are being built on which of the following rivers ?
(A) Godavari
(B) Ganga
(C) Brahmaputra
(D) Mahanadi

16. Which of the facts is/are correct about the Kharg Island, that was in the news recently ?
I. It is located about 25-30 kms off Iran's coast in the Persian Gulf.
II. Despite its tiny size, Kharg Island plays a major role in the Iranian economy, serving as the country's main crude oil export terminal which handles approximately 90 per cent of Iran's oil exports.
III. The Trump administration is mulling military options around Kharg Island, including the deployment of US Special Forces, in an effort to weaken Iran's ability to sustain the on-going war against US and Israel.
How many statements given above are correct ?
(A) Only one
(B) Only two
(C) All three
(D) None of the above

17. Consider the following statements in relation to global maritime energy trade :
I. Strait of Malacca followed by Strait of Hormuz form the most critical choke points in global maritime energy trade.
II. Saudi Arabia has the largest proven oil reserves.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

18. Consider the following facts about Jal Jeevan Mission 2·0, which has been approved recently :
I. Total outlay of the Jal Jeevan Mission has been enhanced to ₹ 8·69 lakh crore.
II. A uniform national digital framework, namely 'Sujalam Bharat', shall be instituted.
III. Under 'Sujalam Bharat', every village shall be assigned a unique Sujal Gaon / Service Area ID, digitally mapping the complete drinking water supply system from source to tap.
How many statements given above are correct ?
(A) Only one
(B) Only two
(C) All three
(D) None of the above

19. As per the Second Advance Estimates of Annual GDP for 2025-26, the GVA of Agriculture & Allied Sector is estimated at :
(A) ₹ 52·08 lakh crore
(B) ₹ 58·35 lakh crore
(C) ₹ 62·18 lakh crore
(D) ₹ 63·59 lakh crore

20. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the credit flow to agricultural sector ?
(A) Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme, launched in August 1998 provides farmers with timely and affordable credit for purchasing agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, as well as for meeting cash requirements related to crop production and allied activities
(B) Since 2019, KCC scheme has been extended to cover working capital requirement of animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries
(C) The Government of India's Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) offers short-term agricultural loans to farmers at a concessional interest rate of 7% through Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)

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(D) Farmers who repay promptly receive an additional 4% incentive, effectively reducing their interest rate to just 3%

21. The limit for collateral free short-term agricultural loans, including loans for allied activities, has been raised from ₹ 1·60 lakh to :
(A) ₹ 2·00 lakh per borrower
(B) ₹ 2·50 lakh per borrower
(C) ₹ 3·00 lakh per borrower
(D) ₹ 3·50 lakh per borrower

22. Double deflation method has been introduced in the estimation of new series of the National Income accounting.
Which of the following statements in this regard is correct ?
I. Under this method the effect of prices is removed separately for inputs and outputs.
II. Deflators will be used at a more granular level and over 300 item-level indices have been used in new series of national accounts.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

23. Which of the following indices is being used as a price deflator by the National Statistics Office for estimation of new series of the GDP ?
(A) Consumer Price Index (Combined deflator)
(B) Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers
(C) Wholesale Price Index
(D) None of the above

24. Consider the List-I (Categories of States in Fiscal Health Index 2026) and List-II (States) in relation to NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index 2026 and choose the correct code given below :

List-I

(a) Achievers
(b) Front Runners
(c) Performers
(d) Aspirational

List-II

1. Uttar Pradesh
2. Haryana
3. Odisha
4. West Bengal

Correct code is :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	3	1	2	4
(B)	4	3	2	1
(C)	1	2	3	4
(D)	1	3	4	2

25. NITI Aayog's report on Fiscal Health Index 2026 highlights certain policy priorities for strengthening fiscal health across states. These include :
I. Enhancing revenue mobilisation and strengthening state own-tax capacity.
II. Rationalising committed expenditures to restore fiscal flexibility.
III. Improving the composition and quality of capital expenditure.
IV. Adopting medium-term fiscal planning frameworks to manage deficits.
V. States with persistent stress must undertake targeted consolidation measures.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I, II, III and IV
(B) Only II, III, IV and V
(C) Only I, III, IV and V
(D) All I, II, III, IV and V

26. Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has undertaken design and development works on Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) under the Nuclear Energy Mission namely :
I. 220 MWe Bharat Small Modular Reactor (BSMR-200),
II. 55 MWe Small Modular Reactor (SMR-55) and
III. Upto 5 MWth High temperature gas cooled reactor meant for hydrogen generation.
Correct code is :
(A) Only II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

27. Which of the following initiatives has/have been taken for the marketing of cooperative products from India ?
I. Development of market linkage in 29 countries.
II. Establishment of dedicated Fruits & Vegetables and Grains & Spices Divisions.
III. National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL) acts as a Merchant Exporter for Aquaculture and Shrimp.
IV. Development of a multilingual AI-enabled digital learning platform for farmers.
Correct code is :
(A) Only II and III
(B) Only II
(C) Only I, II and III
(D) All I, II, III and IV

28. Kavach, is being installed in Indian Railways as major safety measure, is an indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the Kavach ?
(A) Kavach was adopted as National ATP system in April 2023
(B) Kavach Version 4·0 has been successfully commissioned on 1452 Route km, covering the high density Delhi- Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah routes
(C) Kavach version 4·0 covers all the major features required for the diverse railway network
(D) Kavach version 3·2 was deployed on 1465 Rkm on South Central Railway

29. Capacity Development (CD) scheme is being implemented by :
(A) Ministry of Heavy Industry
(B) Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
(C) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
(D) Ministry of Jal Shakti

30. US has launched investigations into India under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 over alleged 'structural excess capacity' in manufacturing, targeting sectors in India such as :
I. Textiles
II. Health products
III. Construction goods
IV. Automotive goods
V. Solar modules
VI. Petrochemicals
VII. Steel

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Correct code is :
(A) Only I,II,V and VII
(B) Only II, IV, VI and VII
(C) Only I, III, IV
(D) All I, II, III, IV, V, VI and VII

31. Consider the following statements in relation to supply of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in India :
I. 55-65% of India's LNG imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz.
II. Qatar accounts for nearly 40% of India's LNG imports.
III. A strike on Qatar Energy's Ras Laffan LNG complex—the world's largest LNG export facility accounting for about one-fifth of global LNG supply triggered a sharp reaction in global energy markets.
How many statements given above are correct ?
(A) Only one
(B) Only two
(C) All three
(D) None of the above

32. Which of the following Indian oil companies has planned to establish an oil refinery in the USA ?
(A) Oil and Natural Gas Company
(B) Indian Oil
(C) Reliance Industries Ltd.
(D) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd.

33. The proceeds from asset monetisation projects are allocated to four different heads depending on the implementing agency of the project, as well as the project's mode of monetization :
I. Consolidated Fund of India.
II. PSU/Port Authorities allocation.
III. State Consolidated Fund.
IV. Direct investment (private).
Correct code is :
(A) Only I
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only I and IV
(D) All I, II, III and IV

34. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the services sector of Indian economy ?
(A) India's services exports share in GDP averaged 12·3% during FY23-FY25
(B) India's Services sector accounts for nearly 30% of total employment
(C) Computer services accounted for over two-thirds of India's total software services exports in FY 2024-25
(D) Software services remain the largest component with for over 40% share in total services exports

35. The size of the Economic Stabilisation Fund is :
(A) ₹ 0·5-trillion
(B) ₹ 1-trillion
(C) ₹ 1·5-trillion
(D) ₹ 2·0-trillion

36. Which of the following countries launched the 'forced labour' trade probe against India and 59 other countries ?
(A) USA
(B) European Union
(C) China
(D) Germany

37. India's credit-to-GDP ratio stands at :
(A) about 50 per cent
(B) about 55 per cent
(C) about 53 per cent
(D) about 60 per cent

38. The 14th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) :
(A) Yaounde, Cameroon
(B) Shanghai, China
(C) Canberra, Australia
(D) Cairo, Egypt

39. The government recently announced standards of …… for India to accelerate trade of green hydrogen derivatives under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.
I. Green ammonia
II. Green methanol
III. Green Ethanol
IV. Green Methane
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only II and III
(D) Only III and IV

40. Consider the following statements in relation to recently cuts in special excise on petrol and diesel :
I. Finance Ministry reduced the special excise duly (SAED) on petrol and diesel by ₹ 10 per litre.
II. The move aims to reduce retail prices of petrol and diesel so as to protect the consumers from the adverse impact of rise of crude oil in international market.
Which of the above statements is/are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

Answers with Hints

1. (B) The base year for GDP estimates has been revised to 2022-23, CPI base year has been revised to 2024 and the base year of IIP also revised to 2022-23.
2. (A) 3. (C) 4. (D)
5. (A) Annual growth rate of Real GVA in FY 2025-26 (II AE) was highest in Manufacturing (11·5%), followed by Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication and services related to Broadcasting (10·1%), Financial, Real Estate & Professional Services (9·9%) and Construction (7·1%).
6. (C)
7. (A) According to the Union Budget 2026-27, States share of taxes (22%), Interest payment (20%), Defence (11%), major subsidies (6%).
8. (C)
9. (D) In the modern era, Strait of Hormuz has become one of the world's most important energy corridors. Supertankers carrying oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE pass through this narrow route. Most of this energy supply goes to Asian markets. China, for instance, remains Iran's only major oil customer. While Saudi Arabia and the UAE have pipelines that

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can bypass the strait. After the US-Israel attack on Iran in February–March 2026, Iran has issued warning the ships not to pass through this narrow route.

10. (C)
11. (C) Interest rate on Employees Provident Fund deposits was 8·15% in FY 2022-23. It was increased to 8·25% in FY 2023-24 and the same was retained in FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26.
12. (C)
13. (A) SWAYATT is a flagship initiative of the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
14. (D) The Korea 5% model demonstrates that climate adaptation can be decentralized, affordable and participatory.
15. (C) India took a pioneering step in inland waterway navigation as Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation stones on March 5, 2026 for four river lighthouses along the banks of the Brahmaputra River, marking the first time lighthouse infrastructure to be established on an inland waterway in the country. The four sites—Bogibeel in Dibrugarh district, Pandu in Kamrup (Metro) district, Silghat in Nagaon district, all along the south bank of the river and Biswanath Ghat in Biswanath district, the only one in the north bank, are located at strategic points along Brahmaputra (National Waterway-2).
16. (C)
17. (A) Strait of Malacca has 23·2% share (29·1 million barrels /day) in global maritme energy trade followed by Strait of Hormuz (20·9% share with 26·2 million barrels/day). Venezuela has the largest proven oil reserves in the world (303221 billion barrels in 2024) followed by Saudi Arabia (267200 billion barrels), Iran (208600 billion barrels), Canada (163000 billion barrels).
18. (C) On March 10, 2026, the Union Cabinet approved the Jal Jeevan Mission 2·0, which places special emphasis on strengthening rural drinking water supply and developing a service-based, sustainable and transparent system.
19. (A) As per the Second Advance Estimates of Annual GDP for 2025-26, the GVA of Agriculture & Allied Sector is estimated at ₹ 52,08,800 crore registering a growth of 2·4%.
20. (D) Farmers who repay promptly receive an additional 3% incentive, effectively reducing their interest rate to just 4%.
21. (A) The limit for collateral free short-term agricultural loans, including loans for allied activities, has been raised from ₹ 1·60 lakh to ₹ 2·00 lakh per borrower by RBI *w.e.f.*, 1 January, 2025. This move enhances credit accessibility, particularly for small and marginal farmers (over 86% of the total farmers).
22. (C)
23. (C) The base year revision of WPI is still in progress. Until the updated WPI becomes available, the existing WPI will continue to be used as a deflator. However, it is important to note that the method of use of WPI has undergone change in new series compared to the old series. In the new series, WPI is used at granular level. Separate item-level WPI for output and intermediate consumption are used in Manufacturing sector. Additionally, the Ministry plans to incorporate the PPI in the near future once it is officially released by the DPIIT.
24. (A) 25. (D)
26. (D) Under the Nuclear Energy Mission announced in the Union Budget 2025–26, a total budgetary provision of ₹ 20,000 crore has been made for the research, design, development and deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), a constituent unit of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has undertaken design and development works on SMRs namely, 1. 220 MWe Bharat Small Modular Reactor (BSMR-200), 2. 55 MWe Small Modular Reactor (SMR-55), and 3. Up to 5 MWth High temperature gas cooled reactor meant for hydrogen generation. The lead units of these SMRs will be established at DAE sites for technology demonstration.
27. (D) Since its inception, National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL) has exported 54 different products to 29 countries, with total exports valued at ₹ 5,731 crore.
28. (A) Kavach was adopted as National ATP system in July, 2020. Major improvement in Kavach Version 4.0 includes increased Location Accuracy, Improved Information of Signal Aspects in bigger yards, Station to Station Kavach interface on OFC and Direct Interface to existing Electronic Interlocking System.
29. (C) Capacity Development (CD) scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). It aims to strengthen India's statistical system through improvements in data quality, timeliness and digital dissemination.
30. (D) The investigation, initiated under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 on March 11, 2026, targets sectors in India such as textiles, health products, construction goods, automotive goods, solar modules, petrochemicals and steel.
31. (C) 32. (C) 33. (D)
34. (A) India's services exports share in GDP averaged 9·7% during FY23-FY25, marking a notable rise from 7·4% in the pre-pandemic period and highlighting the growing role of the services sector in supporting economic growth.
35. (B) Announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on March 13, 2026, the ₹ 1 lakh crore (₹ 1 trillion) Economic Stabilisation Fund is a strategic financial buffer designed to protect India's economy against unforeseen global headwinds, such as supply chain disruptions and geopolitical crises, like the conflict in West Asia. This fund serves as a 'shock absorber', providing vital fiscal headroom to tackle unexpected shocks without compromising the 4·4% fiscal deficit target set for FY26.

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MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS — Current Questionnaire

1. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the INS Anjadip ?
(A) An anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft
(B) This is the fifth of the eight vessels being built under the anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft project
(C) INS Anjadip is named after the island off the coast of Karwar in north Karnataka in the Arabian Sea
(D) The vessel is engineered to act as a 'Dolphin Hunter'

2. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the bodyguard satellites ?
I. These are the satellites that protect original and key satellites from attacks in space.
II. Bodyguard satellites are meant to identify and counter threats to orbiting spacecraft.
III. These are spy satellites.
Correct code is :
(A) Only II
(B) Only I and II
(C) Only II and III
(D) All I, II and III

3. India signed a $ 2·6 billion uranium supply agreement with which of the following country ?
(A) France (B) Australia
(C) Canada (D) Russia

4. Which of the following statements is correctly explains the 'Donald Dash' ?
(A) Spread of the US-Iran conflict to entire middle east
(B) More Americans are choosing to move to other countries
(C) Expansion of neo protectionism as a result of tariff war
(D) Threat of the US President Donald Trump for the annexation of the Green Land

5. Which of the following pairs are matched correctly in relation to code names given by the countries for their offensive attacks in the ongoing war in Middle East ?
I. Operation Epic Fury—The US
II. Operation Roaring Lion—Israel
III Operation True Promise IV—Iran
How many pairs given above are correct ?
(A) Only one
(B) Only two
(C) All three
(D) None of the above

6. Which of the following statements is/are correct in relation to resolution for the removal of Speaker in Lok Sabha ?
I. Any number of members can sign the notice but a minimum of two is mandatory.
II. Article 96 of the Constitution bars a speaker or a deputy speaker from presiding over the House sitting while a resolution for his removal from office is under consideration.
III. The Speaker has a constitutional right to defend himself in the House if the resolution is discussed in the Lok Sabha.
IV. All the members of the House are counted to compute the majority, not the members present and voting.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I, II and III
(B) Only II, III and IV
(C) Only I, III and IV
(D) All I, II, III and IV

7. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the Raisina Dialogue ?
(A) The Raisina Dialogue is a biannual practice
(B) Global leaders, policy-makers and technology experts participate in Raisina Dialogue
(C) The theme of 2026's Raisina Dialogue was 'Samskara'. Assertion, Accommodation, Advacement
(D) The Raisina dialogue was organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in partnership with India's Ministry of External Affairs

8. Who among the following was the Chief Guest at 11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue (2026) ?
(A) Alexander Stubb, President of Finland
(B) Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister of Australia
(C) Sanae Takaichi, Prime Minister of Japan
(D) Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil

9. What is Ghatak, that was in the news ?
(A) It is a submarine
(B) It is an Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs)
(C) It is a destroyer class ship of Indian Coast Guard
(D) It is a multi-utility war tank

10. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the Exercise Vayushakti ?
I. It was conducted on February 27, 2026.
II. It was conducted at the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Rajasthan.
III. For the first time, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has simulated a realistic environment closely reflecting conditions expected in actual combat.
IV. Vayushakti 2026 showcased a small glimpse of the IAF's motto, 'Achook, Abhedya, Sateek' (Unerring, Impenetrable, Precise).
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only IV
(C) Only II and IV
(D) All I, II, III and IV

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11. Consider the following pairs in relation to recent shuffling of Governors :
I. West Bengal—R.N. Ravi
II. Maharashtra—Jishnu Dev Varma
III. Bihar—Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain (retired)
IV. Telangana—Shiv Pratap Shukla
How many Pairs given above are matched correctly ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

12. Which of the following pairs is/are matched correctly in relation to recent appointments of Lt. Governors in the UTs ?
I. UT Ladakh-VK Saxena
II. UT Delhi-Taranjit Singh Sandhu
Correct code is :
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

13. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the 'Minuteman III' ?
I. It is a nuclear capable intercontinental ballistic missile.
II. It is commonly referred to as the 'doomsday missile'.
III. It was test fired by the US Air Force Global Strike Command.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

14. Who are '*Pragati*' and '*Vikas*' that were in the news recently ?
(A) Mascots for the upcoming Population Census 2027
(B) Newly launched rural development programmes
(C) Newly launched urban development programmes
(D) Documentaries nominated for Oscar Awards 2026

15. Which of the following weapons killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ?
(A) Blue Sparrow missile
(B) Heckler & Koch HK416 assault rifle
(C) AGM-65 Maverick
(D) Jericho III

16. Which of the following states have proposed to ban social media use by children ?
I. Rajasthan
II. Andhra Pradesh
III. Madhya Pradesh
IV. Karnataka
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and IV
(C) Only I and III
(D) Only II and III

17. Which of the following statements is /are correct about the 'Naga Pudavu' that was in the news recently ?
I. It is a hill cave known locally as 'Naga Pudavu' near Kumananthozhu in Theni district.
II. A series of ancient rock paintings believed to date back several millennia has been discovered in a hill cave known locally as 'Naga Pudavu'
III. The paintings could be around 5,000-8,000 years old and may belong to the Neolithic (New Stone Age) period.
III. The paintings have been discovered by a team of researchers from the Archeological Survey of India.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I, II and III
(B) Only III and IV
(C) Only II, III and IV
(D) All I, II, III and IV

18. Which of the following team won Ranji Trophy 2025-26 ?
(A) Mumbai
(B) Jharkhand
(C) Jammu & Kashmir
(D) Karnataka

19. India won ICC (Men's) T-20 World Cup 2026 by defeating :
(A) England
(B) New Zealand
(C) South Africa
(D) Australia

20. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the Exercise Lamitiye-2026 ?
(A) It is the Eleventh edition of Joint Military Exercise 'LAMITIYE-2026' between Indian Armed Forces and Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF)
(B) It was conducted at Seychelles Defence Academy from 9-20 February, 2026
(C) 'LAMITIYE' meaning 'Friendship' in the Creole language is a biennial training event and has been conducted in Seychelles since 2001
(D) The contingent comprises of personnel from the ASSAM Regiment and participation from Indian Navy and Indian Air Force including INS Trikand and a C-130 aircraft

21. Who among the following was adjudged the Player of the Tournament in just concluded ICC Men's T-20 World Cup ?
(A) Sanju Samson (India)
(B) Will Jacks (England)
(C) Tim Seifert (New Zealand)
(D) Rachin Ravindra (New Zealand)

22. Which of the following political parties recorded a landslide victory in the recently concluded election to in Nepal ?
(A) Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)
(B) Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML)
(C) Nepali Congress (NC)
(D) Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP)

23. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the Gyan Bharatam Mission ?
I. Gyan Bharatam, announced during Union Budget 2026-27, is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture (MoC), Government of India.
II. Gyan Bharatam Mission is aimed at unearthing, safeguarding and preserving India's vast manuscript heritage.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

24. Consider the following statements in relation to 'Jal Jeevan Mission-Har Ghar Nal Se Jal' :

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I. 'By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all' is one of the sub goals of UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

II. As on March 10, 2026, 100% household in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Goa, Telangana, Arunachal Pradesh & Mizoram are getting water supply through pipes.

Correct code is :

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

25. National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025-26 report has been prepared by NHAI in coordination with :

(A) United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)

(B) Indian Institute of Forest, Dehradoon (IIF)

(C) The Energy and Resources Institute ,New Delhi (TERI)

(D) National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

26. Recently which of the following airports has been declared as an international airport ?

(A) Madurai Airport (Tamil Nadu)

(B) Darbhanga Airport (Bihar)

(C) Durgapur Airport (West Bengal)

(D) Gwalior Airport (Madhya Pradesh)

27. Which of the following statements is/are correct in relation to passive euthanasia ?

I. The Supreme Court of India allowed passive euthanasia for a 32-year-old man who has been in a comatose condition for more than 12 years, by withdrawing his artificial life support.

II. Passive euthanasia is the intentional act of letting a patient die by withholding or withdrawing life support or the treatment necessary to keep him alive.

Correct code is :

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

28. 'Software on wheels' refers to :

(A) Software–defined diagnostic services

(B) Software-defined vehicles

(C) Online delivery of software

(D) Out-of the class teaching

29. Bug Bounty Programme is an initiative of :

(A) Income Tax Department

(B) Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)

(C) NITI Aayog

(D) National Institute of Health and Family Welfare

30. Which of the following Mail/Express trains has been designated by the Indian Railways as 'Common Men's Train' ?

(A) Duranto Express
(B) Amrit Bharat Express
(C) Tejas Express
(D) Humsafar Express

31. What stands for I-STEM ?

(A) Indian Science Technology and Engineering facilities Map

(B) Indian Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

(C) Integrated System of Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

(D) Indian System of Translation, Evaluation and Management

32. Which of the following facts is/are correct about the 'SAMAVESH 2026' :

I. The 'National SAMAVESHA 2026' was organised in collaboration with I-STEM, the Delhi Science and Technology (S&T) Cluster (DRIIV) and the Dean (R&D), IIT Delhi.

II. SAMAVESHA 2026 served as an important platform for dialogue, collaboration and knowledge exchange across the research community.

Correct code is :

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

33. Which is the first port in India to launch the Digital Twin initiative for port management ?

(A) V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority, Tuticorin

(B) Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), Mumbai

(C) Deendayal Port Authority (DPA), Kandla

(D) Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata

34. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the microalgae-based air tower ?

(A) India's first microalgae based PureAir Tower has been installed along the Aerocity highway corridor in New Delhi.

(B) Algae based air purifiers use living microalgae to capture CO_2 and produce oxygen through photosynthesis

(C) Algae-based technology provides continuous oxygen generation, humidity control and zero filter, however it does not absorb particulate matter (PM)

(D) Beyond air purification, the algae biomass produced can be harvested for nutritional supplements, biofuels, or agricultural applications, creating a circular economy approach to environmental sustainability

35. Which of the following gases are released when oil well or depot is struck by a missile or ignited by explosives ?

I. Carbon dioxide
II. Chlorine
III. Carbon monoxide
IV. Sulpher dioxide
V. Hydrogen Sulphide
VI. Ozone

Correct code is :

(A) Only I, III, IV and V
(B) Only III, IV and V
(C) Only I, III and VI
(D) Only II, III, IV and VI

36. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the Van Allen Probe A and Van Allen Probe B spacecrafts ?

I. NASA launched Van Allen Probe A and its twin Van Allen Probe B in 2012 from Cape Canaveral in Florida.

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II. The spacecraft were designed to study the Van Allen radiation belts, which are zones of charged particles trapped by Earth's magnetic field.

III. The Van Allen Probe A spacecraft weighing more than 1,300 lb (600 kg) has re-entered Earth's atmosphere on March 11, 2026.

How many statements given above are correct ?

(A) Only one
(B) Only two
(C) All three
(D) None of the above

37. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the 'One World One Family Mission' ?

I. It is Inspired by the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—the world is one family.

II. It is a global mission led by Sri Madhusudan Sai.

III. Free nutrition, education and healthcare are offered free of charge.

IV. The mission's work spans rural India, the USA, Fiji, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and beyond 100 countries.

V. No service is done out of pity, no child seen as lesser and no beneficiary viewed as 'other'.

Correct code is :

(A) Only I, III, III and V
(B) Only II, III and IV
(C) Only I, IV and V
(D) All I, II, III, IV and V

38. PM Narendra Modi on February 22, 2026 inaugurated India's first Namo Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS). It Connects :

(A) Ahmadabad-Vadodara
(B) Delhi-Meerut
(C) Lucknow-Kanpur
(D) Chennai-Bengaluru

39. Sarvam AI provides a purpose-built AI stack for building applications in Indian languages. Sarvam AI Models include :

I. Bulbul V3
II. Saaras V3
III. Maurya
IV. Sarvam Vision

Correct code is :

(A) Only IV
(B) Only I and II
(C) Only I, II and III
(D) All I, II, III and IV

40. 'Badhna Hai toh Yahan Judna Hai' is a nationwide campaign launched by :

(A) Ministry of Education
(B) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
(C) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
(D) Ministry of Child and Women Development

Answers with Hints

1. (B) The Indian Navy commissioned INS Anjadip on February 27, 2026. This is the third of the eight vessels being built under the anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft project. The vessel is engineered to act as a 'Dolphin Hunter', focussed on the detection, tracking and neutralisation of enemy submarines in coastal areas.
2. (B)
3. (C) India and Canada on March 2, 2026 signed a $ 2·6 billion uranium supply agreement. Under the agreement, Canada will supply uranium to fuel India's nuclear reactors. The focus is on ensuring a stable and predictable supply of fuel for India's Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), which run primarily on natural uranium.
4. (B) Data compiled by *The Wall Street Journal* from many nations shows that the US is now seeing a rise in people leaving, not just people moving in. For the first time since the Great Depression, more people left the US last year than moved in. Some observers have called the recent surge the 'Donald Dash', noting that departures have increased during Trump's second term. The rise of remote work, high housing and healthcare costs and growing interest in living overseas particularly in Europe, have all contributed to the shift.
5. (C) Beginning on 28 February, 2026, Israel and the United States engaged in coordinated joint attacks on various sites in Iran. Codenamed Operation Roaring Lion by Israel and Operation Epic Fury by the United States, the attacks have targeted key Iranian officials, military commanders and facilities. Iran's response has been named Operation True Promise IV.
6. (D)
7. (A) The annual Raisina Dialogue was organized in New Delhi on 5-7 March, 2026.
8. (A)
9. (B) Ghatak is a stealth-capable UCAV, based on a flying-wing configuration. It is designed for low radar cross-section and internal weapon carriage. Once operational, Ghatak could undertake deep-strike missions, penetrating heavily defended airspace to hit high-value targets without placing pilots at risk. Operating autonomously or alongside manned aircraft, it could also be tasked with suppressing or destroying enemy air defences including radar stations and missile systems and striking strategic infrastructure with precision-guided munitions.
10. (D) The day-and-night Vayu-shakti exercise saw the participation of the French-origin Rafale and Mirage 2000, the Russian-origin Su-30 MKI and MiG-29 and the European Jaguar combat aircraft. These were joined by the Russian Mi-17 helicopter and the American C-130J and C-17, as well as the European C-295 transport aircraft. The indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv and Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Prachand also took part.
11. (D) 12. (C)
13. (D) Minuteman III has an approximate range of 6,000 miles and is able to move at a speed of over 15,000 miles per hour thus being able to target on other continents in minutes. It can carry warheads that are much stronger than the atomic bomb that was used on Hiroshima.

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14. (A) Union Home Minister Amit Shah on March 5, 2026 unveiled two mascots, '*Pragati*' and '*Vikas*', for the upcoming Population Census 2027. These mascots also symbolise the equal participation of women and men in fulfilling the resolve to make India a developed nation by 2047.
15. (A) The Blue Sparrow missile is part of the Sparrow family (including Black and Silver variants) of air-launched ballistic missiles, originally designed as a target missile to test Israel's Arrow anti-ballistic missile system. The missile measures around 6·51 metres in length, weighs about 1,900 kg, and has a range of about 2,000 km, allowing aircraft to launch it far from enemy airspace. Its defining feature is its quasi-ballistic trajectory—unlike conventional cruise missiles that fly low and straight, the Blue Sparrow climbs on a steep arc and then descends rapidly toward the target.
16. (B) Karnataka has announced a ban on social media use by children under 16 in its Budget 2026-27 and Andhra Pradesh is moving to introduce a measure that would prohibit those under 13 to use such services—a signal of the growing momentum in India to protect children from the various harms that social media platforms can cause.
17. (A) The discovery was made by M Selvam, a postgraduate Tamil teacher at the Government Higher Secondary School in Kadamalaikundu and an independent archaeological researcher who has been engaged in field explorations across the region for several years.
18. (C) Jammu & Kashmir won their first-ever Ranji Trophy title in the 2025-26 season, defeating Karnataka in the final held from February 24-28, 2026, at Hubballi. J&K won based on a massive first-innings lead after scoring 584, while Karnataka was held to 293 in their first innings, securing a historic win.
19. (B) India has clinched the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 title with a commanding win over New Zealand at the Narendra Modi Stadium, not only lifting the trophy but also claiming a record-breaking $3 million (around ₹ 27·48 crore) prize. Powered by explosive top-order batting, India posted a massive 255/5, setting a daunting target that New Zealand could not chase, sealing a memorable victory in one of the highest-scoring finals in T20 World Cup history. With the victory, India became the first team to defend the T20 World Cup title and also the first host nation to lift the trophy at home. The triumph followed India's title win in the 2024 T20 World Cup, when Rohit Sharma led the team to victory in the tournament held in the United States and the West Indies.
20. (B) The Joint Exercise was conducted at Seychelles Defence Academy from 9-20 March, 2026.
21. (A)
22. (A) Rapper – turned - politician Balendra Shah's Rastriya Swatantra Party secured major victory in the crucial general election held on March 5, 2026. The RSP's win would mark the first time in decades that a single party has won a majority in Nepal, which has a two-system format that makes it difficult for any one party to win outright.
23. (B) Gyan Bharatam, announced during Union Budget 2025-26, is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture (MoC), Government of India aimed at unearthing, safeguarding and preserving India's vast manuscript heritage.
24. (C) Government of India is committed to make provision for safe & potable tap water supply in adequate quantity, of prescribed quality and on a regular & long-term basis to all rural households in the country, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 6·1—"By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all". Towards this end, the Government of India is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in partnership with states, since August 2019.
25. (D)
26. (A) The Union Cabinet on March 10, 2026 has approved declaration of Madurai Airport, Tamil Nadu, as an International Airport. Madurai Airport, located in the Temple City of Madurai, Tamil Nadu, is one of the oldest airports in the State. It serves as a crucial gateway to Southern Tamil Nadu and plays a pivotal role in promoting tourism and pilgrimage, thereby contributing to the overall growth of the region.
27. (C) The Supreme Court on March 11, 2026 allowed passive euthanasia for a 32-year-old man who has been in a comatose condition for more than 12 years, by withdrawing his artificial life support. Passive euthanasia is the intentional act of letting a patient die by withholding or withdrawing life support or the treatment necessary to keep him alive. Harish Rana suffered head injuries after falling from the fourth floor of a building in 2013 and has been in a coma for over a decade.
28. (B) Software defined vehicles (SDVs) where, unlike traditional cars, functionality is primarily determined by software rather than hardware. These cars evolve through Over-The-Air (OTA) updates, offering personalized experiences like AI-driven infotainment, Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS) and connected, autonomous, shared and electric (CASE) features.
29. (B) The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has launched its first structured Bug Bounty Programme to further strengthen the security of the Aadhaar system. The programme allows cybersecurity experts to look for possible weaknesses in some of UIDAI's key digital platforms. If they find genuine security gaps and report them responsibly, they will receive rewards based on the seriousness of the issue.

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30. (B) To provide affordable means of transportation to the low and middle income families, Indian Railways have introduced Amrit Bharat services that are fully non-AC modern trains. These trains have been designated as the 'Common Men's Train'. The present composition of Amrit Bharat consists of 11 General Class coaches, 8 Sleeper Class coaches, 1 Pantry car and 2 Luggage cum Divyangjan coaches.

31. (A) The Indian Science, Technology and Engineering Facilities Map (I-STEM) is a national online portal of the Government of India that helps researchers and innovators discover and access high-cost, publicly funded scientific equipment across the country. In simple terms, I-STEM enables users to : See what advanced research equipment is available in India; Know where it is located; Officially request time to use it for their research or innovation work. I-STEM focusses exclusively on publicly funded (government-funded) research equipment.

32. (C) The 'National SAMAVESHA 2026' was organised at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi in collaboration with Indian Science Technology and Engineering Map (I-STEM), the Delhi Science and Technology (S&T) Cluster (DRIIV) and the Dean (R&D), IIT Delhi. SAMAVESHA 2026 served as an important platform for dialogue, collaboration and knowledge exchange across the research community.

33. (A) The V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority has achieved a major technological milestone by becoming the first port in India to launch the Digital Twin initiative for port management. A digital twin is a dynamic, virtual replica of a physical object, system, or process that updates in real-time using IoT sensor data, machine learning, and software analytics. By simulating real-world conditions, these models allow organizations to monitor performance, predict maintenance needs and optimize operations to improve efficiency and reduce waste.

34. (C) Microalgae based Pure Air Tower uses photosynthetic microalgae to absorb carbon dioxide (CO_2), particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) directly at street level.

35. (B) When an oil well or depot is struck by a missile or ignited by explosives, it results in an immediate, catastrophic event characterized by massive fireballs, sustained high-temperature blazes and severe, long-lasting environmental and health hazards. The destruction often releases toxic cocktails of chemicals, including carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulphide and nitrogen oxides, which can lead to 'black rain' or highly acidic precipitation in surrounding areas.

36. (C) 37. (D) 38. (B)

39. (D) Bulbul V3, available in 11 Indian languages, is Sarvam's latest text-to-speech model, specifically designed for Indian languages and accents. It features improved audio quality, 30+ speaker voices and supports up to 2500 characters per request. Saaras V3, supports all 22 languages of Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution along with English, is Sarvam's state-of-the-art speech recognition model with flexible output formats. It supports multiple output modes including transcription, translation, verbatim, transliteration and code-mixed outputs. Saaras is built to make Indic languages LLM-comprehensible, offering accurate transcriptions and translations across 23 languages (22 Indian languages + English); Mayura is Sarvam's powerful translation model designed to convert text between English and Indian languages while preserving meaning and context; Sarvam Vision is a 3B parameter state-space Vision Language Model (VLM) purpose-built for high-accuracy Document Intelligence. It powers Document Intelligence pipeline.

40. (B) Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Jayant Chaudhary, has launched a nationwide campaign called 'If you want to grow, join here' to accelerate India's digital skill development movement through the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH).

P.Darpan

Continued from Page 127

36. (A) The United States Trade Representative's (USTR) office on March 12, 2026 (local time) initiated an unfair trade practices probe against 60 countries, including India, accusing them of 'failure' to impose a ban on the import of goods produced with forced labour. The action was taken under Section 301(b) of the Trade Act of 1974, which allows the USTR to initiate investigations into foreign trade practices that are 'unreasonable or discriminatory' and burden US commerce, potentially leading to retaliatory tariffs or restrictions.

37. (C) 38. (A)

39. (A) The government on March 7, 2026 announced standards of green ammonia and green methanol for India to accelerate trade of green hydrogen derivatives under the National Green Hydrogen Mission. The mission was approved by the Union Cabinet on January 4, 2023, with an initial outlay of ₹ 19,744 crore to make India a global hub for production, utilisation and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives.

40. (A) Offering relief to oil marketing companies (Indian Oil, HPCL, BPCL) amid rising crude oil prices due to the West Asia conflict, GoI on March 27, 2026 reduce the Special Excise Duty (SAED) on petrol and diesel by ₹ 10 per litre. With this move Special Excise Duty on petrol is now ₹ 3 per litre and on diesel zero.

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Solved Paper

UGC-NET/JRF EXAMINATION (December 2025)

(Held on 3-1-2026)

Geography

1. Arrange the following elements of a standard hill-slope from bottom to top :
   1. Waxing slope
   2. Free-face slope
   3. Waning slope
   4. Debris slope

   Choose the correct answer from the options given below :
   (A) 1, 2, 3, 4 (B) 3, 4, 2, 1
   (C) 4, 2, 3, 1 (D) 2, 1, 4, 3

2. Match the List-I with List-II :

   List-I
   (Sampling Method)
   (a) Random (b) Stratified
   (c) Purposive (d) Systematic

   List-II
   (Sample Selection)
   1. The population is divided into groups and then samples are selected within each group.
   2. By numbering each subject and then selecting the K^{th} subject.
   3. Each subject will get equal chance of selection.
   4. When only minimal information is available about the parent population.

   Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	3	1	4	2
(C)	4	3	2	1
(D)	2	4	1	3

3. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).

   Assertion (A) : The Central Place Theory of Christaller is based on demographic hierarchy of central places.

   Reason (R) : Not settlement can claim to be a central place unless it has a complementary area.

   In the light of the above statements, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :
   (A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
   (B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
   (C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
   (D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

4. Identify the correct statements :
   1. In the oceans the highest salinity is found in the latitudinal belt of 15°N and 10°S.
   2. Sodium chloride is the leading salt in oceans.
   3. Great Salt Lake of Anatolian plateau has a salinity of 240%.
   4. Baltic sea salinity is much below the normal salinity of the oceans.

   Choose the correct answer from the options given below :
   (A) Only 1 and 2
   (B) Only 2 and 4
   (C) Only 1 and 3
   (D) Only 1 and 4

5. Arrange the following biological units in lower to higher biotic order :
   1. Populations
   2. Cells
   3. Tissues
   4. Communities

   Choose the correct answer from the options given below :
   (A) 3, 2, 1, 4 (B) 3, 2, 4, 1
   (C) 2, 3, 4, 1 (D) 2, 3, 1, 4

6. Arrange the following concepts chronologically in the evolution of geographical thought :
   1. Sequent occupance
   2. Lebensraum
   3. Teleological approach
   4. Topophilia

   Choose the correct answer from the options given below :
   (A) 2, 3, 4, 1 (B) 3, 2, 4, 1
   (C) 3, 2, 1, 4 (D) 2, 3, 1, 4

7. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).

   Assertion (A) : The Jains registered least growth rate of population in India (2001-2011).

   Reason (R) : Conversion into other religious faiths is very common in Jains in India.

   In the light of the above statements, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :
   (A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
   (B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
   (C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
   (D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

8. Match the List-I with List-II :

   List-I
   (Country)
   (a) Sudan
   (b) Bangladesh
   (c) Indonesia
   (d) Norway

   List-II
   (Infant Mortality Rate in 2024)
   1. 36 2. 23
   3. 17 4. 02

   Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	4	3	2	1
(B)	3	4	1	2
(C)	1	2	3	4
(D)	2	1	4	3

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9. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Country)

(a) China
(b) Niger
(c) South Korea
(d) Mexico

List-II

(Percent of Population below 15 years of age in 2024)

1. 23 2. 18
3. 47 4. 11

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	3	2	4	1
(B)	2	3	4	1
(C)	2	3	1	4
(D)	3	2	1	4

10. Carlsberg ridge is located in which of the following oceans ?
(A) North Pacific Ocean
(B) South Atlantic Ocean
(C) Indian Ocean
(D) South Pacific Ocean

11. The angle of repose refers to :
(A) Maximum slope angle which allows debris to stay in place without movement
(B) Minimum slope angle which allows debris movement
(C) Nearly all natural surfaces which have slope to some degree
(D) Hillslopes that are covered with residual regolith, which grades downward into solid and unaltered rock

12. Which of the following soil order is found in the Decan Plateau of western India ?
(A) Vertisols (B) Histosols
(C) Mollisols (D) Inceptisols

13. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).
Assertion (A) : Arizona state of USA has most of the copper concentration mills and smelters.
Reason (R) : Copper concentration and smelters are bulk-reducing industries.
In the light of the above statements, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :
(A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
(C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
(D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

14. An isolated hill formed by felsic batholith and which is revealed by erosion of weaker surrounding rock is called as :
(A) Hogback-ridge
(B) Flatiron
(C) Horst
(D) Monadnock

15. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).
Assertion (A) : In the youth stage of the Cycle of Erosion of Davis the absolute height and relative relief increases rapidly.
Reason (R) : Valley deepening is the dominant tendency of streams in the youth stage.
In the light of the above statements, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :
(A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
(C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
(D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

16. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Metamorphic Rock)

(a) Gneiss (b) Anthracite
(c) Quartzite (d) Marble

List-II

(Original Rock)

1. Limestone 2. Sandstone
3. Bituminous 4. Granite

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	4	3	2	1
(B)	1	2	3	4
(C)	4	2	1	3
(D)	3	1	4	2

17. Which of the following rivers represents an example of antecedent drainage ?
(A) Kaveri (B) Luni
(C) Kosi (D) Godavari

18. In the process of location of economic activities, the localization of shoe and leather industries was propounded by :
(A) Hoover (B) Pred
(C) Palander (D) Smith

19. In the given equation $p_1 = a_{11}X_1 + a_{12}X_2 + \ldots + a_{1k}X_k$; what a_{11} refers to :
(A) Principal components
(B) Communality
(C) Eigen value
(D) Loadings

20. Capital city of which of the following states is located in the least earthquake hazard sensitivity zone ?
(A) West Bengal
(B) Maharashtra
(C) Mizoram
(D) Chhattisgarh

21. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).
Assertion (A) : Datum plane is difficult to determine.
Reason (R) : Sea level is not the same always and everywhere; it fluctuates.
In the light of the above stateents, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :
(A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
(C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
(D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

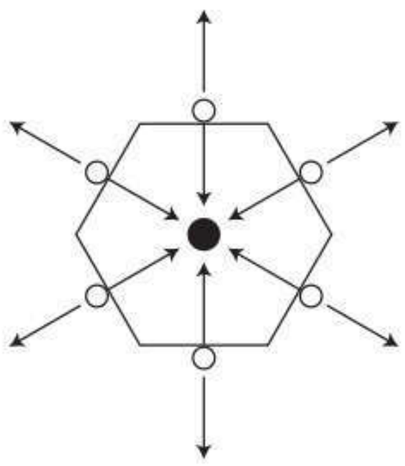
22. The article "Transportation and Societal Framework" is contribution of which of the following scholar ?
(A) Zipf (B) Ullman
(C) Hurst (D) Stouffer

23. In determining the concept of resources, Zimmermann used the term 'Neutral Stuff' to refer :

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(A) Technology
(B) Human Resource
(C) Nature
(D) Stock

24. According to the Central Place Theory the following diagram represents the nesting of complementary areas under which one 'K' Value ?



(A) K-3 (B) K-4
(C) K-7 (D) K-18

25. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Concept)

(a) Ecological Niche
(b) Ecosystem
(c) Evolution of species through the process of mutation
(d) Vegetation Succession

List-II

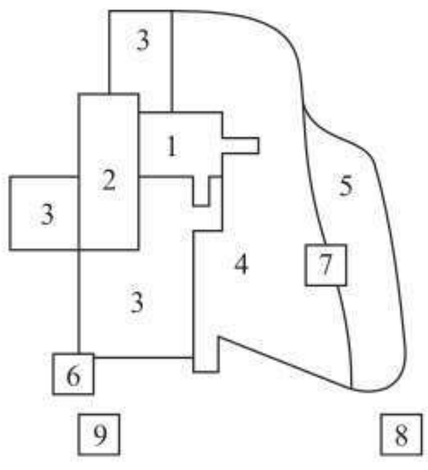
(Scholar)

1. Tansley 2. Elton
3. Clements 4. De Vries

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	1	3	4
(B)	2	1	4	3
(C)	4	1	2	3
(D)	1	2	3	4

26. In the given diagram of the Multiple Nuclei Model of Harris and Ullman, number 7 represents which of the following ?



(A) Heavy Manufacturing Centre
(B) Outlying Business District
(C) Residential Suburb
(D) Industrial Suburb

27. Which of the following is measured on the basis of the actual temperature and wind speed ?
(A) Relative humidity
(B) Wind-chill index
(C) Lapse rate
(D) Heat index

28. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Volcano)

(a) Mount Etna
(b) Cotopaxi
(c) Mount Mayon
(d) Mount Hamilton

List-II

(Location)

1. Australia 2. Sicily
3. Ecuador 4. Philippines

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	3	2	4
(B)	2	4	1	3
(C)	1	2	4	3
(D)	2	3	4	1

29. Which of the following bands of Landsat satellites when used in combination will show the vegetation limits quite clearly ?
(A) 1 and 2 (B) 2 and 3
(C) 3 and 4 (D) 5 and 7

30. Arrange the following surfaces from lowest to highest albedo rate :
1. Fresh snow
2. Old snow
3. Sand
4. Green Forest

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :
(A) 1, 2, 3, 4 (B) 4, 1, 2, 3
(C) 1, 3, 4, 2 (D) 4, 3, 2, 1

31. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Concept)

(a) Trickling Down and Polarisation Effect
(b) Cumulative Causation Model
(c) Core Periphery Model
(d) Growth Pole Model

List-II

(Scholar)

1. Gunnar Myrdal
2. John Friedman
3. Francis Perraux
4. Hirschman

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	3	4	1
(B)	1	4	2	3
(C)	3	2	1	4
(D)	4	1	2	3

32. Arrange the following states of India in descending order on the basis of level of urbanization in 2011 :
1. Mizoram 2. West Bengal
3. Gujarat 4. Punjab

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :
(A) 3, 1, 4, 2 (B) 3, 1, 2, 4
(C) 1, 3, 4, 2 (D) 1, 3, 2, 4

33. India signed and ratified Kyoto Protocol in which year ?
(A) 1997 (B) 2001
(C) 2002 (D) 2007

34. Appiko movement was most similar to which of the following social movements in India ?
(A) Nupi-Lan
(B) Save-Silent Valley
(C) Chipko Movement
(D) Narmada Bachao Andolan

35. In which one of the following regions the variability of rainfall is highest ?
(A) Utkal Plain
(B) Rajasthan
(C) Western Coastal region
(D) Eastern Himalaya

36. Identify incorrect statements with reference to the Demographic Transition Theory :
1. It was originally put forth by Notestein in 1929.
2. In the early expanding stage of demographic transition total population increases with increasing rates of population growth.
3. In low stationary stage of demographic transition infant mortality rates remain high.
4. At continental level, Asia and Europe represent two extreme of demographic transition.

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :
(A) Only 2, 3 and 4
(B) Only 1, 2 and 3

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(C) Only 1, 2 and 4
(D) Only 1, 3 and 4

37. Choose the correct statements regarding earthquakes :
1. The first waves to reach the seismometer are S-waves.
2. The scale of earthquake magnitude was devised in 1935.
3. The Richter scale is used to measure the energy released by earthquakes.
4. Earthquakes occur frequently at spreading and converging boundaries of lithospheric plates.

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :
(A) Only 2, 3 and 4
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 1 and 3
(D) Only 2 and 4

38. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Relative levels of Urbanisation in 2024)

(a) Highly Urbanised
(b) Moderately Urbanised
(c) Less Urbanised
(d) Least Urbanised

List-II

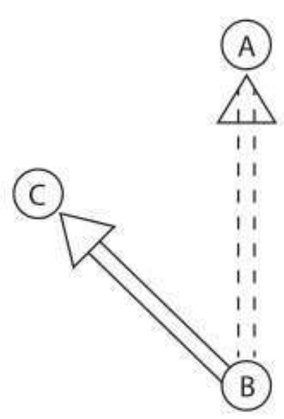
(Examples of Countries)

1. Sri Lanka 2. India
3. Austria 4. Germany

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	4	3	2	1
(B)	4	3	1	2
(C)	3	4	1	2
(D)	3	4	2	1

39. The following diagram represents which one element of the spatial interaction model of Ullman ?



(A) Complementarity
(B) Intervening opportunity
(C) Transferability
(D) Sustainability

40. Arrange the following leading exporters in world merchandise trade in 2024 in descending order of their share :
1. Netherlands 2. USA
3. China 4. Japan

Choose the correct answer the options given below :
(A) 2, 3, 4, 1 (B) 2, 3, 1, 4
(C) 3, 2, 1, 4 (D) 3, 2, 4, 1

41. Arrange the publications of following industrial location theories in correct sequence from oldest to latest :
1. D.M. Smith's Theory
2. August Losch's Theory
3. Allen Pred's Theory
4. Alfred Weber's Theory

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :
(A) 3, 1, 4, 2 (B) 4, 2, 1, 3
(C) 1, 2, 3, 4 (D) 4, 3, 1, 2

42. In which of the following aerial photographs, negative is allowed to move continuously over the fixed slit ?
(A) Composite photograph
(B) Sonne's Photograph
(C) Timetrogon Photograph
(D) Vertical Photograph

43. Which one of the following marine biomes is the deepest biome zone ?
(A) Neritic Zone
(B) Hadal Zone
(C) Epipelagic Zone
(D) Bathypelagic Zone

44. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).

Assertion (A) : The Harvey of 'Explanation in Geography' (1969) was a transformed intellectual in 'Social Justice and the City' (1973).

Reason (R) : The theories and methodologies of the conventional geography were proving to be utterly inadequate for the pursuit of geography as a socially relevant discipline engaged in the betterment of the human conditions.

In the light of the above statements, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :
(A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
(C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
(D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

45. Who among the following said that 'there are not necessities but everywhere possibilities; and man as master of these possibilities is the judge of their use' ?
(A) Febvre (B) Blache
(C) Brunhes (D) Spate

46. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Biome)

(a) Tropical Evergreen Rainforest
(b) Temperate Grassland
(c) Boreal Forest
(d) Mediterranean

List-II

(Country)

1. Hungary 2. Morocco
3. Indonesia 4. Finland

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	3	4	2
(B)	2	3	1	4
(C)	3	1	4	2
(D)	3	1	2	4

47. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Process)

(a) Slope Decline Theory
(b) Slope Replacement Theory
(c) Parallel Retreat Theory
(d) Graded Stream Theory

List-II

(Geomorphologist)

1. W. Penck
2. L. C. King
3. G. K. Gibert
4. W. M. Davis

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	3	1	4
(B)	4	1	3	2
(C)	2	4	1	3
(D)	4	1	2	3

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48. Arrange the following religious groups of India in ascending order on the basis of percentage share in total population (2011) :

1. Jains 2. Buddhists
3. Sikhs 4. Christians

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) 4, 3, 2, 1 (B) 1, 2, 3, 4
(C) 3, 4, 1, 2 (D) 2, 1, 4, 3

49. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Industrial Region)

(a) Mohawk Valley
(b) Po Valley
(c) Ruhr Valley
(d) St. Lawrence Valley

List-II

(Country)

1. Canada 2. Germany
3. USA 4. Italy

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	3	4	2	1
(B)	4	3	2	1
(C)	3	1	2	4
(D)	4	3	1	2

50. Which of the following is regarded as the most typical value of a series that remains unaffected by the presence of extreme values ?

(A) Mode
(B) Mean
(C) Coefficient of Variation
(D) Standard deviation

51. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).

Assertion (A) : India is in the late expanding stage of demographic transition.

Reason (R) : The Empowered Action Group (EAG) states have lowest total fertility rates among all staes of India.

In the light of the above statements, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :

(A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
(C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
(D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

52. Choose the incorrect statements regarding clouds and fronts :

1. High clouds absorb more solar radiation, warming the planet.
2. In an occluded front a cold front overtakes a warm front.
3. When warm air invades cold air, the boundary is a cold front.
4. Cyclones are often called as fair-weather system.

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) Only 2 and 3
(B) Only 1 and 2
(C) Only 1 and 4
(D) Only 3 and 4

53. Arrange the following types of maps from smaller to larger scale :

1. Million Sheet
2. Degree Sheet
3. Quadrant Sheet
4. Inch Sheet

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) 4, 3, 2, 1 (B) 1, 2, 3, 4
(C) 3, 4, 1, 2 (D) 2, 1, 4, 3

54. Arrange the following countries in descending order in terms of their total population as per UN World Population Date 2024.

1. Bangladesh
2. Pakistan
3. Indonesia
4. Nigeria

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) 3, 2, 4, 1 (B) 3, 2, 1, 4
(C) 2, 3, 1, 4 (D) 2, 3, 4, 1

55. Scarification refers to :

(A) Excavation and land disturbances initiated to extract mineral resources
(B) Spontaneous downhill motion of regolith
(C) Mudflows on the slopes of erupting volcanoes
(D) Mass wasting of Earth materials with high water content

56. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I

(Crop Productivity Index)

(a) Carrying Capacity Method
(b) Efficiency Index Method
(c) Index of Productivity Method
(d) Weighted Ranking Coefficient

List-II

(Applied By)

1. Bhatia
2. Sapre and Despande
3. Stamp
4. Enyedi

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	3	4	2	1
(B)	2	3	1	4
(C)	3	1	4	2
(D)	4	1	2	3

57. In which of following regions the total fertility rate is highest as per UN World Population Data 2024 ?

(A) Western Africa
(B) South Asia
(C) East Asia
(D) Central Asia

58. Insolation will be high when :

(A) Solar radiation is back towards the space
(B) Energy is emitted at longer wavelengths
(C) Solar energy received at the earth surface is between 0·3 m to 3·0 m
(D) Sun in directly overhead

59. Arrange the following humidity provinces in correct sequence based on the lowest to highest moisture index as proposed by Thornthwaite :

1. Humid
2. Dry-Sub-humid
3. Per Humid
4. Moist sub-humid

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) 4, 1, 2, 3 (B) 2, 3, 1, 4
(C) 2, 4, 1, 3 (D) 1, 2, 3, 4

60. 'The Geography of the Peace' is work of which of the following scholar ?

(A) Mackinder (B) Mahan
(C) Spykman (D) Cohen

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61. Identify correct statements regarding culture :

1. Wissler produced continental scale maps of native culture areas.
2. Ratzel's favoured culture hearths were Southeast Asia and Northwest South America.
3. Dynamic Culture regions Tripartite model was proposed by Kniffen.
4. Sauer's idea of culture hearth was influenced by his early work on plant domestication in Mexico.

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) Only 1 and 4
(B) Only 1 and 2
(C) Only 3 and 4
(D) Only 2 and 3

62. Which of the following is an example of exhaustible but reusable resource according to Renner ?

(A) Tin
(B) Wind
(C) Human Talent
(D) Natural Gas

63. Arrange the following Indian environmental laws and projects in chronological order of their initiation :

1. Biological Diversity Act
2. The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act
3. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act
4. Project Tiger

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) 4, 3, 2, 1 (B) 3, 4, 2, 1
(C) 3, 4, 1, 2 (D) 4, 3, 1, 2

64. Extreme heat and pressure transform shale into :

(A) Marble (B) Quartzite
(C) Slate (D) Gneiss

65. Which of the following stresses on openness to a range of opinions in social enquiry, artistic experimentation and political empowerment ?

(A) Modernism
(B) Post-Modernism
(C) Exceptionalism
(D) Marxism

66. Arrange the following relief features of Atlantic Ocean from south to north :

1. Romanche deep
2. Dolphin ridge
3. Walvis ridge
4. Wyville Thomson ridge

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) 1, 4, 2, 3 (B) 3, 1, 2, 4
(C) 4, 2, 3, 1 (D) 3, 2, 1, 4

67. It signifies the industrial practices first associated with workplace innovation with four important elements of division of labour, standardisation, arrangement of correct sequence for production and precision of assembly line. It refers to :

(A) Fordism
(B) Actor-Network Theory
(C) Commodity-chain
(D) Agglomeration of Economics

68. Which of the following is not correct with reference to E-20 petrol ?

(A) It has 20 per cent blending of ethanol bio-fuel
(B) Ethanol is a renewable fuel
(C) Ethanol blending boosts farmer's incomes
(D) A NITI Aayog study has noticed that GHG (Green House Gases) emissions in case of use of sugarcane based ethanol are 65 percent higher as compared to petrol

69. Identify the correct statements :

1. Herodotus believed that all history must be treated geographically and all geography must be treated historically.
2. Writings of Ptolemy inspired for exploration of the Terra-Icognito.
3. AI-Masudi in his book Kitab-al-Hind gave a detailed description of the Indian Monsoon.
4. Gerland suggested that since man could not be put to scientific analysis, study of man should be taken outside the purview of geography.

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) Only 1, 2 and 3
(B) Only 2, 3 and 4
(C) Only 1, 3 and 4
(D) Only 1, 2 and 4

70. Arrange the following lithospheric plates from south to north on the map of world :

1. Juan De Fuca plate
2. Scotia Plate
3. Cocos Plate
4. Nazca Plate

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) 2, 4, 3, 1 (B) 2, 3, 1, 4
(C) 2, 1, 4, 3 (D) 1, 2, 3, 4

71. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).

Assertion (A) : Volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are quite frequent in Hawaiian Islands.

Reason (R) : Hawaiian islands are located in Cireum-pacific 'Ring of Fire'.

In the light of the above statements, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :

(A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
(C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
(D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

72. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change finalized AR6 Synthesis Report on Climate Change in which of the following years ?

(A) 2006 (B) 2014
(C) 2019 (D) 2023

73. Which of the following market-based mechanisms were directly part of Kyoto Protocol as offers to countries to meet their targets ?

1. International Emission Trading
2. Clean Development Mechanism
3. Trade Tariffs
4. Joint Implementation

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Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) Only 1, 2 and 3
(B) Only 2, 3 and 4
(C) Only 1, 3 and 4
(D) Only 1, 2 and 4

74. In which of the following states of India, the degree of primacy of the primate city as per the Law of Primate City is highest ?
(A) Rajasthan
(B) Uttar Pradesh
(C) West Bengal
(D) Madhya Pradesh

75. Which of the following countries land area has the highest percentage of polders ?
(A) New Zealand
(B) Poland
(C) Thailand
(D) Netherlands

76. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).

Assertion (A) : Monsoon is characterised by a seasonal reversal of wind direction.

Reason (R) : Differential rates of heating of land and sea produces thermally induced pressure gradient.

In the light of the above statements, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :

(A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
(C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
(D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

77. Identify the correct statements with reference to transport in India :
1. The rail transport share in total transport is 65 per cent in the freight traffic and 85 per cent in the passenger traffic.
2. Bharatmala project was started in 2015 for the development of National Highways.
3. National Waterway 3 runs in the western coastal region of India.
4. Ennore port is located in the state of Tamil Nadu, India.

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) Only 3 and 4
(B) Only 1, 2 and 3
(C) Only 2 and 4
(D) Only 2, 3 and 4

78. In the concentric zone model of Von Thunen, firewood and timber production and crop farming without fallow fall in which pair of zones respectively ?
(A) Zone IV and III
(B) Zone V and VII
(C) Zone II and III
(D) Zone VII and IV

79. Arrange the following regional planning programmes of India in chronological order based on their year of initiation :
1. National Capital Region
2. National Watershed Development Programme for Rainfed Areas
3. Command Area Development Programme
4. Desert Development Programme

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) 4, 3, 1, 2 (B) 4, 3, 2, 1
(C) 3, 4, 2, 1 (D) 3, 4, 1, 2

80. Identify the correct statements regarding morphometric analysis :
1. Drainage frequency is the relation between number of channels per unit of area.
2. Form factor is the ratio between altitudinal variation and total relative relief.
3. Drainage density is the relation between length of channels per unit of area.
4. Circulatory ratio is obtained by dividing basin area by maximum basin length.

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) Only 1 and 2
(B) Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 3 and 4
(D) Only 1 and 3

81. Identify those agricultural regions of Whittlesey (1936) which were important in the Less Developed Countries.
1. Shifting Cultivation
2. Pastoral Nomadism
3. Commercial Plantation Agriculture
4. Commercial Livestock Ranching

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

(A) Only 1, 3 and 4
(B) Only 2, 3 and 4
(C) Only 1, 2 and 3
(D) Only 1, 2 and 4

82. The frequency distribution of spot heights and hill summits refers to :
(A) Hypsographic curve
(B) Altimetric frequency curve
(C) Clinographic curve
(D) Composite profile

83. Thailand-Cambodia conflict of 2025 occurred in which of the geopolitical regions of Mackinder ?
(A) Geographical Pivot
(B) Heartland
(C) Inner Crescent
(D) Outer Crescent

84. Tokyo, Kawasaki and Yokohama industrial region is located in which of the following regions of Japan ?
(A) Kwanto Plain
(B) Kinki Plain
(C) Nobi Plain
(D) Taranaki Lowlands

85. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I
(Type of Time Series)
(a) Secular
(b) Periodic
(c) Cyclical (Long duration)
(d) Irregular

List-II
(Example)
1. Production of milk
2. Earthquake
3. Growth of population of a country
4. Climate Change

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	4	3	2	1
(C)	3	1	4	2
(D)	2	4	1	3

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86. Which of the following layers of atmosphere is the home of strong, persistent winds that flow from west to east ?
(A) Mesosphere
(B) Thermosphere
(C) Stratosphere
(D) Heterosphere

87. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I *(Local Wind)*	**List-II** *(Country)*
(a) Berg	1. Argentina
(b) Zonda	2. Italy
(c) Samoon	3. South Africa
(d) Sirocco	4. Iran

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	3	1	4	2
(B)	3	4	1	2
(C)	2	4	3	1
(D)	1	3	2	4

88. Given below are two statements : one is labelled as Assertion (A) and the other is labelled as Reason (R).

Assertion (A) : The Kuroshio current system runs from Taiwan to the Bearing strait.

Reason (R) : Tsushima current has relatively colder temperature and it modifies the weather conditions of the Australian coast.

In the light of the above statements, choose the most appropriate answer from the options given below :
(A) Both (A) and (R) are correct and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are correct, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A)
(C) (A) is correct, but (R) is not correct
(D) (A) is not correct, but (R) is correct

89. Enhanced Fujita Intensity scale pertains to :
(A) Typhoon
(B) Lightning
(C) Tornado
(D) Thunderstorm

90. Match the List-I with List-II :

List-I
(Vegetation Group)
(a) Hekistotherms
(b) Mesotherms
(c) Megatherms
(d) Microtherms

List-II
(Climate Type)
1. Warm Temperate Rainy Climate
2. Cold Forest Climate
3. Polar Climate
4. Tropical Rainy Climate

Choose the correct answer from the options given below :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	3	4	2	1
(B)	4	2	1	3
(C)	3	1	4	2
(D)	4	1	3	2

Directions—(Q. 91 to 95) Read the following paragraph and answer the questions :

By the mid-1960's, once the need for precision in geographical research through increased use of statistical-mathematical techniques had been commonly accepted and the controversy regarding systematic versus regional geography resolved, the euphoria about quantitative 'revolution' had greatly receded. The professionals began to look back on the course of revolution and access the resultant gains and losses for the discipline. In human geography, alongside the rejection of the concept of strict operation of the principle of economic rationality there was a perceptible shift from deductive to inductive mode of explanation. The paper titled 'The Decision Process in a Spatial Context' (1964) proved seminal in starting of the movement toward behaviouralism as an 'alternative' to the normative approach to theory.

91. The 'quantitative revolution' phase models and theories were not based on which one of the following assumptions ?
(A) Man is a rational (economic) person
(B) 'Space' as an isotropic surface
(C) Focus upon the individual rather than to approach problems at the level of the social group
(D) Man has infinite or perfect knowledge of his space (environment and resources)

92. Who criticized the 'exceptionalist' claims made for regional geography and put forward a strong case for geography to adopt the philosophy and methodology of positivism ?
(A) Hartshorne
(B) Schaefer
(C) Richthofen
(D) Hettner

93. Which of the following is associated with behaviouralism in geography ?
(A) Social Physics
(B) Gravity Model
(C) Central Place Theory
(D) Mental Maps

94. The paper 'The Decision Process in a Spatial Context' was authored by whom ?
(A) Carl Sauer
(B) Julian Wolpert
(C) W. K. Kirk
(D) Gould and White

95. Which of the following works first focussed on a two fold division of geography into regional and systematic geography ?
(A) Geographia Generalis
(B) Almagest
(C) Anthropogeographie
(D) Erdkunde

Directions—(Q. 96 to 100) Read the following paragraph and answer the questions :

India is a land of great physiographic diversity. In the northern part the highest and the youngest folded mountains of world, glaciated peaks, deep valleys and gorges are present. In the southern part extends the peninsular plateau with ancient Pre-Cambrian rocks, denudated surfaces, senile topography and relict mountains. The Himalayan mountain ranges in the north and north-east along with the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are tectonic ranges and they are primarily result of plate-tectonics.

96. Which one of the following is not a tectonic island ?
(A) Little Andaman
(B) Great Nicobar
(C) Minicoy
(D) Car Nicobar

97. Himalayas belong to which one of the following orogenies ?

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(A) Caledonian
(B) Hercynian
(C) Pre-cambrian
(D) Alpine

98. Which one of the following is a relict mountain ?
(A) Pir Panjal
(B) Eastern Ghats
(C) Mishi hills in Arunachal Pradesh
(D) Lusai Hills

99. Which one of the following was a part of Gondwanaland ?
(A) Meghalaya plateau
(B) Kashmir Valley
(C) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
(D) Ladakh

100. Which one of the following passes is not prone to glaciation ?
(A) Nathu La
(B) Zoji La
(C) Bhorghat
(D) Rohtang pass

Answers with Hints

1. (B) In a standard hill-slope, the waning slope occurs at the bottom, followed by the debris slope. Above this lies the free-face slope, which is steep and cliff-like. The waxing slope forms the uppermost convex part near the crest.
2. (C) Random sampling ensures that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected, while stratified sampling involves dividing the population into subgroups and sampling from each. Purposive sampling is used when researchers have limited information and must select specific cases that serve their research goal and systematic sampling follows a mathematical interval, such as picking every K^{th} subject from a list.
3. (D) Christaller's Central Place Theory is based on the functional and economic hierarchy of services, not on demographic hierarchy. However, the concept of a complementary area that supports a central place is fundamental to the theory.
4. (B) The highest oceanic salinity is found in the subtropical belts around 20°-30° latitude, not near the equatorial belt of 15°N-10°S. The Great Salt Lake is in Utah (not Anatolia) and its salinity does not reach 240%.
5. (A) Cells are the basic structural and functional units of life, which combine to form tissues. Tissues organize to form organisms and a group of organisms of the same species constitutes a population. Multiple populations of different species interacting together form a community, making this the highest biotic order among the given options.
6. (C) The chronological order begins with the Teleological approach, popularized by Carl Ritter in the early 19th century, followed by Friedrich Ratzel's concept of Lebensraum in the late 19th century. Derwent Whittlesey later introduced Sequent Occupance in 1929, while the humanistic concept of Topophilia was developed by Yi-Fu Tuan much later in 1974.
7. (C) According to the 2011 Census of India, the Jain community registered the lowest decadal growth rate at approximately 5·4%, primarily driven by high literacy levels, late marriages and urbanization within the community rather than mass conversion to other faiths.
8. (C) According to international health data, Sudan exhibits the highest infant mortality rate among the listed countries at 36 per 1,000 live births, followed by Bangladesh at 23 and Indonesia at 17. Norway, benefiting from highly advanced healthcare systems, records the lowest rate at 2, highlighting significant global disparities in neonatal and infant survival.
9. (B) Based on 2024 demographic data, Niger has one of the world's youngest populations with approximately 47% of its citizens under the age of 15, while South Korea, facing a severe demographic crisis, has the lowest percentage among the listed countries at 11%. China follows with approximately 18% and Mexico, which has a more balanced but still youthful profile compared to East Asian nations, sits at 23%.
10. (C) The Carlsberg Ridge is a major tectonic feature that forms the northern section of the Central Indian Ridge, extending from the Chagos-Laccadive Ridge towards the Gulf of Aden in the Indian Ocean. It serves as a divergent plate boundary between the African and Indo-Australian plates and is characterized by active sea-floor spreading and seismic activity.
11. (A) The angle of repose represents the steepest angle at which a pile of granular material, such as sand or rock debris, remains stable due to the internal friction between the particles. If this critical angle is exceeded, the gravitational force overcomes the frictional resistance, causing the material to slide or slump downward until a stable angle is restored.
12. (A) The Deccan Plateau is dominated by black cotton soil, which belongs to the Vertisol order characterized by high clay content that expands when wet and shrinks when dry.
13. (A) Arizona is the leading copper-producing state in the USA because copper concentration and smelting are bulk-reducing industries that must be located near the source of heavy, low-grade ore to minimize transportation costs.
14. (D) A Monadnock (or inselberg) is an isolated hill or small mountain that rises abruptly from a surrounding gentle slope or plain, typically formed from resistant igneous rock like a felsic batholith. It remains standing as a prominent landform because it is composed of more durable material that survives the long-term erosion that strips away the surrounding weaker rock.
15. (D) Assertion (A) is incorrect because in W.M. Davis's cycle of erosion, absolute height (summital elevation) remains relatively constant or increases only slightly during the youthful stage as uplift has already occurred.

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16. (A) Metamorphic rocks are formed when original parent rocks undergo intense heat and pressure, causing them to transform into new structures. In this set, Gneiss is formed from the metamorphosis of Granite, Anthracite is a high-grade coal formed from Bituminous coal, Quartzite originates from the sedimentary rock Sandstone, and Marble is the result of metamorphosed Limestone.
17. (C) The Kosi river is a prominent example of antecedent drainage because it originated before the major upliftment of the Himalayas and maintained its southward course by cutting deep gorges through the rising mountain barriers. While the Kaveri and Godavari follow the regional slope as consequent rivers and the Luni is an endoreic river that disappears into the Thar Desert.
18. (A) Edgar M. Hoover analyzed the location of the shoe and leather industry to illustrate his theories on industrial location, emphasizing the roles of transport costs, labour costs and agglomeration economies. He argued that the localization of such industries is driven by a complex interplay of locational factors that determine the most profitable site for production based on both input sourcing and market access.
19. (D) In the principal component equation, the coefficients (a_{11}, a_{12}, etc.) represent the weights or contributions of each original variable to the principal component, which are formally known as Loadings. These values indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between the original variables and the derived component, effectively showing how much each variable 'loads' onto that specific factor.
20. (D) Chhattisgarh is located on the stable Peninsular Plateau (specifically the Bastar Craton and Mahanadi Basin), which falls primarily under Zone II, the least active earthquake hazard zone. In contrast, Mizoram is in Zone V (Very High Risk), while West Bengal and Maharashtra contain areas falling under the more sensitive Zones III and IV.
21. (A) A datum plane, such as Mean Sea Level (MSL), is a fundamental reference surface used to measure elevations; however, determining a truly fixed plane is exceptionally difficult. This difficulty arises because sea level is not a constant surface; it fluctuates globally and locally due to tidal cycles, thermal expansion of water, atmospheric pressure changes, and ocean currents.
22. (C) The article titled 'Transportation and Societal Framework' was a significant contribution by the scholar M.E. Eliot Hurst. This work marked a shift in transport geography from a purely quantitative and economic focus toward a socio-political perspective.
23. (C) Erich Zimmermann in his functional theory of resources, he famously stated that 'Resources are not; they become'. He used the term 'Neutral Stuff' to describe elements of nature that are currently outside the scope of human utility. According to Zimmermann, an element of the physical environment only transforms from 'neutral stuff' into a 'resource' once human knowledge, technology and social needs find a way to extract value from it.
24. (A) This diagram represents the Marketing Principle (K–3) in Walter Christaller's Central Place Theory, where the nesting of complementary areas follows a specific geometric rule. In this model, each higher-order center serves its own market area plus one-third of the market area of the six surrounding lower-order centers $1 + 6 \times 1/3 = 3$. The arrows in the diagram pointing from the edges of the hexagon toward the central point visually confirm this 'marketing' catchment pattern.
25. (B) Ecological Niche is associated with Charles Elton, who defined it as an organism's functional role; Ecosystem was coined by A.G. Tansley in 1935 to describe the whole complex of organisms and physical factors; Mutation Theory for species evolution was proposed by Hugo de Vries and Vegetation Succession was systematically developed by Frederic Clements.
26. (B) In the Multiple Nuclei Model developed by Chauncy Harris and Edward Ullman (1945), number 7 represents the Outlying Business District, which acts as a secondary commercial hub that competes with the Central Business District (1), typically serving residential areas that have expanded far from the city center.
27. (B) The Wind-chill index is a measure of how cold it feels to the human body, calculated based on the combination of the actual air temperature and wind speed. As wind speed increases, it carries heat away from the body more rapidly, making the effective temperature feel much lower than the thermometer reading. In contrast, the Heat Index uses temperature and relative humidity, while the Lapse Rate refers to the rate of temperature decrease with altitude.
28. (D) Mount Etna is an active stratovolcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy; Cotopaxi is one of the world's highest active volcanoes, located in the Andes Mountains of Ecuador; Mount Mayon is renowned for its 'perfect cone' shape in the Philippines and Mount Hamilton is located in Victoria, Australia.
29. (C) In remote sensing, the combination of Landsat Bands 3 (Red) and 4 (Near-Infrared) is the standard for identifying and mapping vegetation limits. Vegetation reflects very little Red light (Band 3) due to chlorophyll absorption but reflects a high amount of Near-Infrared light (Band 4) due to the internal structure of leaves. This sharp contrast, often utilized in calculating the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), allows researchers to

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clearly distinguish between healthy vegetation and other surface types.

30. (D) The correct arrangement from lowest to highest albedo is : Green Forest (approx. 5-15%), Sand (approx. 20-40%), Old snow (approx. 40-70%) and Fresh snow (approx. 80-90%). Fresh snow has the highest albedo of any natural surface on Earth, reflecting the vast majority of incoming sunlight.
31. (D) Trickling Down and Polarisation Effects were theorized by Albert Hirschman; the Cumulative Causation Model was developed by Gunnar Myrdal to explain regional inequalities; the Core-Periphery Model is a contribution of John Friedmann; and the Growth Pole Model was originally formulated by François Perroux to describe how economic development originates from a central point.
32. (C) According to the 2011 Census of India, the descending order of urbanization for these states is Mizoram at 52·1%, followed by Gujarat at 42·6%, then Punjab at 37·5%, and finally West Bengal at 31·8%.
33. (C) India signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol in August 2002. While the protocol was originally adopted in Japan in 1997 and entered into force in 2005.
34. (C) The Appiko movement, which started in the Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka in 1983, was most similar to the Chipko Movement of the Himalayas. Both movements utilized the non-violent method of hugging trees to prevent them from being felled by commercial loggers.
35. (B) Variability is inversely proportional to the amount of rainfall; therefore, arid and semi-arid regions like Western Rajasthan experience extreme variability in annual precipitation. In contrast, high-rainfall regions like the Eastern Himalayas or the Western Coastal region have a much lower coefficient of variation because their seasonal rainfall is more reliable.
36. (D) Statement (1) is incorrect because the Demographic Transition Theory (DTT) was originally put forth by Thompson (1929), not Notestein (who refined it in 1945). Statement (3) is incorrect because in the 'low stationary stage' (Stage 4), infant mortality rates are low, not high; and statement (4) is incorrect as Asia and Europe do not represent the two extremes–Africa and Europe/North America do.
37. (A) This question evaluates fundamental seismological concepts. Statement (1) is incorrect because P-waves (Primary waves) are the fastest seismic waves and always reach a seismometer before S-waves.
38. (A) Based on 2024 global statistics. Germany is highly urbanized with approximately 78% of its population living in urban centers. Austria follows as moderately urbanized at roughly 60%. India is classified as less urbanized with a rate of about 36%, while Sri Lanka remains among the least urbanized in this group at approximately 19%.
39. (B) The diagram represents the concept of Intervening Opportunity, a key element of Edward Ullman's spatial interaction model. This principle suggests that the interaction between an origin (B) and a distant destination (A) will be reduced or diverted if a closer, equally attractive alternative (C) exists. In the diagram, the solid arrow toward (C) and the weakened dashed line toward (A) visually demonstrate how the closer point 'intervenes' and captures the flow that would have otherwise gone to the further location.
40. (C) Based on 2024 world merchandise trade data, the descending order of leading exporters by their share is China, which remains the world's largest exporter (~$3·6 trillion), followed by the USA (~$2·1 trillion). The Netherlands typically ranks next among these options due to its massive re-export and logistics hubs (~$921 billion), followed by Japan (~$707 billion).
41. (B) Alfred Weber's Least Cost Theory was published in 1909; August Losch's Theory of Demand followed in 1939; D.M. Smith published his work on spatial margins of profitability in 1966 and Allan Pred's Behavioural Theory was published in 1967. This sequence tracks the evolution of industrial location study from rigid cost-minimization to modern behavioural and profitability analyses.
42. (B) In aerial photography, a Sonne's Photograph (or continuous strip photograph) is created using a camera where the film or negative moves continuously over a fixed slit at a speed synchronized with the aircraft's movement. This technique allows for the capture of long, continuous and high-resolution images of the terrain without the breaks associated with standard frame cameras. It is particularly useful for detailed corridor mapping of roads, pipelines and railways.
43. (B) The Hadal Zone (also known as the hadalpelagic zone) is the deepest biome zone in the marine environment, extending from 6,000 meters to the very bottom of the deepest ocean trenches. It is characterized by total darkness, near-freezing temperatures and immense water pressure. While the bathypelagic and abyssopelagic zones are also very deep, the Hadal zone specifically refers to the unique ecosystems found within ocean trenches like the Mariana Trench.
44. (A) David Harvey's intellectual trajectory shifted dramatically between his quantitative work in *Explanation in Geography* (1969) and his Marxist turn in *Social Justice and the City* (1973). The Reason is correct because Harvey realized that conventional, 'value-free' quantitative methods were inadequate for addressing urgent social issues like urban poverty and inequality. Consequently, he transformed himself into a radical intellectual, arguing that geography must engage with

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political and economic structures to better the human condition.

45. (A) The famous quote, "There are no necessities, but everywhere possibilities; and man, as master of these possibilities, is the judge of their use," was stated by the French historian Lucien Febvre in his book *A Geographical Introduction to History* (1922). This statement serves as the core definition of Possibilism, which emphasizes that while nature sets certain limits, humans are the active agents who choose how to interact with their environment.
46. (C) Tropical Evergreen Rainforests are dominant in Indonesia; Temperate Grasslands (specifically the Puszta) are characteristic of Hungary; Boreal Forests (Taiga) cover vast areas of Finland; and Mediterranean vegetation is typical of Morocco, which borders the Mediterranean Sea. Each country provides an ideal example of its respective climate and vegetation type.
47. (D)
48. (B) According to the 2011 Census of India, the correct ascending order of these religious groups by their percentage share is : Jains at 0·4%, Buddhists at 0·7%, Sikhs at 1·7%, and Christians at 2·3%. This ranking highlights that Jains are the smallest of the listed minority groups, while Christians form the third-largest religious community in India after Hindus and Muslims.
49. (A) The Mohawk Valley is a key industrial and transport corridor in the USA; the Po Valley is the industrial heartland of Italy (b-4); the Ruhr Valley is a historic coal and steel region in Germany; and the St. Lawrence Valley is a major industrial and shipping route in Canada.
50. (A) The Mode is regarded as the most 'typical' value that remains unaffected by extreme values (outliers) in a data series. Because the mode is determined solely by the frequency of the most common value, its position does not shift even if very high or very low numbers are added to the dataset. In contrast, the Mean and Standard Deviation are highly sensitive to outliers, as they incorporate every single value in their calculation.
51. (C) India is currently in the late expanding stage of demographic transition, marked by declining birth and death rates with continued population growth. The Empowered Action Group (EAG) states actually have higher Total Fertility Rates, not the lowest, compared to southern and western states.
52. (D) A cold front is formed when cold air advances, not when warm air moves into a cold air mass. Cyclones are low-pressure systems associated with cloudiness, rainfall and unstable weather, whereas fair-weather conditions are linked with anticyclones.
53. (B) Map scale represents the ratio of map distance to ground distance; a smaller scale (like the Million Sheet) covers a vast area with minimal detail, whereas a larger scale (like the Inch Sheet) covers a tiny area with high detail. The Million Sheet (1:1,000,000) has the smallest scale because it shrinks the land the most, while the Inch Sheet (1:50,000) has the largest scale as it provides the most magnification.
54. (A) As per the UN World Population Prospects 2024, Indonesia has a population of about 281 million, making it the most populous among the given countries. Pakistan follows with a population of around 248 million, while Nigeria has about 228 million people. Bangladesh, with nearly 171 million people, has the lowest population among the four. Therefore, the correct descending order of population is Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria and Bangladesh.
55. (A) Scarification refers to intentional excavation and surface disturbance of land, mainly associated with mining and extraction of mineral resources. It involves removal or loosening of soil and rock layers due to human activity, unlike natural mass wasting or slope movements.
56. (C) L.D. Stamp developed the Carrying Capacity Method to measure how many people land can support, while Bhatia introduced the Efficiency Index to compare crop yields. Enyedi is recognized for the Index of Productivity and the Weighted Ranking Coefficient was a method applied by Sapre and Despande to analyze regional agricultural disparities.
57. (A) According to UN World Population Data 2024, Western Africa records the highest total fertility rate among the given regions. This is due to persistently high birth rates, lower levels of female education, limited access to contraception and slower demographic transition compared to Asia and Central Asia.
58. (D) Insolation is the incoming solar radiation received per unit area on the earth's surface. It is highest when the Sun is directly overhead and its rays are vertical, because then the angle of incidence is 90°, the rays travel the shortest path through the atmosphere and the same energy is concentrated over a smaller area, giving maximum heating.
59. (C) In Thornthwaite's moisture index classification, moisture availability increases progressively from dry sub-humid conditions to moist sub-humid, then to humid and reaches the maximum under per-humid conditions. Hence, the correct ascending order of moisture index is Dry sub-humid Moist sub-humid Humid Per-humid.
60. (C) *The Geography of the Peace* is a classic work of geopolitics written by Nicholas J. Spykman, a Dutch-American political geographer. The book was published posthumously in 1944 and outlines his rimland theory and ideas on post-World War II balance of power.
61. (A) Anthropologist Clark Wissler prepared continental-scale maps of Native American culture areas based on similarities and differences in culture traits.

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Ratzel's culture hearth discussions focussed more on Southwest Asia and the Mediterranean rather than specifically Southeast Asia and Northwest South America. The dynamic culture regions tripartite model is associated with Russell and Kniffen together, not Kniffen alone. Carl O. Sauer's concept of culture hearths was strongly influenced by his early work on plant domestication and agricultural origins in Mexico and Mesoamerica.

62. (A) According to G.T. Renner's classification, 'exhaustible but reusable resources' are those that are finite in quantity but can be recovered and recycled after use. This group includes most metals such as iron, copper, tin, gold and silver, which do not lose their basic properties during use and can be reused after processing. Wind is inexhaustible, human talent is maintainable and natural gas is exhaustible but non-reusable.

63. (A) Project Tiger was initiated in 1973 as India's first major wildlife conservation programme. This was followed by the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act in 1974, then the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act in 1981. The Biological Diversity Act was enacted much later in 2002.

64. (D) Shale undergoes progressive regional metamorphism with increasing temperature and pressure, transforming sequentially into slate, phyllite, schist and finally gneiss. Slate represents only the low-grade stage of metamorphism. Thus, under extreme heat and pressure, shale is ultimately converted into gneiss.

65. (B) Post-modernism rejects single, universal truths or 'grand narratives' and instead values plurality, diversity, local narratives and marginalized voices in knowledge, art and politics. Modernism and Marxism are more structured and foundational, while exceptionalism is about a belief in uniqueness, not openness to diverse perspectives.

66. (B) In the Atlantic Ocean, major relief features are arranged latitudinally from south to north. The Walvis Ridge lies in the South Atlantic off the southwest coast of Africa, followed northward by the Romanche Deep near the equatorial region. The Dolphin Ridge is located further north in the Atlantic basin, while the Wyville Thomson Ridge lies in the far North Atlantic between Scotland and Iceland.

67. (A) The description refers to Fordism, the industrial system pioneered by Henry Ford. Fordism is based on four key workplace innovations : detailed division of labour, standardisation of parts and products, arranging the correct linear sequence of production and precise, timed work on the moving assembly line. Together these elements revolutionised mass production in early 20th-century industry.

68. (D) A life-cycle assessment supported by NITI Aayog shows that sugarcane-based ethanol actually reduces greenhouse-gas emissions by around 65% compared to petrol, highlighting its climate benefits rather than higher emissions.

69. (D) Herodotus famously linked history and geography, while Ptolemy's maps and concept of *Terra Incognita* (Unknown Land) fueled the Age of Discovery. Statement 3 is incorrect because *Kitab-al-Hind* was written by Al-Biruni, not Al-Masudi. Georg Gerland (Statement 4) argued that geography should be a pure natural science (Geophysics) and since human behaviour followed different laws, he believed the study of man should be excluded from geographical analysis.

70. (A) The Scotia Plate lies closest to Antarctica and is the southernmost among the given plates. North of it is the Nazca Plate along the western margin of South America, followed by the Cocos Plate near Central America. The Juan de Fuca Plate is located further north off the northwestern coast of North America.

71. (C) Volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are frequent in the Hawaiian Islands due to their location over a mantle hotspot, which continuously supplies magma. However, the Hawaiian Islands are not part of the Circum-Pacific Ring of Fire, which is associated with plate boundary volcanism.

72. (D) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change completed and adopted the AR6 Synthesis Report during its 58th plenary session held in Interlaken, Switzerland, from 13–19 March, 2023. This document, titled *Climate Change 2023 : Synthesis Report*, brings together the findings of the three Working Group reports and the three special reports of the Sixth Assessment cycle and is officially dated 2023.

73. (D) The Kyoto Protocol introduced three market-based (flexibility) mechanisms to help industrialised countries meet their emission-reduction commitments in a cost-effective way. These are International Emissions Trading, which allows Annex I parties to trade surplus emission allowances; the Clean Development Mechanism, under which projects in developing countries generate certified emission reductions; and Joint Implementation, where Annex I countries earn credits by financing emission-saving projects in other Annex I states. Trade tariffs were never one of these Kyoto mechanisms.

74. (C) The degree of primacy is highest where the largest city dominates the urban system disproportionately. In West Bengal, Kolkata is overwhelmingly larger and more influential than other cities in the state, showing strong concentration of population, functions and infrastructure. Thus, West Bengal exhibits the highest primate city dominance.

75. (D) Polders are reclaimed low-lying lands protected by dikes and drainage systems. The Netherlands has the most extensive and systematic use of

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polders, with a significant proportion of its land reclaimed from the sea and inland waters. Thus, among New Zealand, Poland, Thailand and Netherlands the highest percentage of polders is found in the Netherlands.

76. (A) Monsoon systems are defined as large-scale winds that seasonally reverse their direction, typically blowing from sea to land in summer and from land to sea in winter. This reversal is driven mainly by the differential heating and cooling of land and sea, which creates thermally induced pressure gradients between continents and adjacent oceans; in summer, hot low-pressure land draws in moist oceanic air, while in winter, cooler high-pressure land pushes air seaward.

77. (D) Bharatmala Pariyojana is a centrally sponsored highways programme started in 2015 to upgrade and expand India's National Highways network, especially through economic corridors and border, coastal and port connectivity roads. National Waterway-3, also known as the West Coast Canal, runs through the western coastal region of India along Kerala, connecting Kollam with Kottapuram and associated canals. Ennore (Kamarajar) Port lies near Chennai on the coast of Tamil Nadu and functions as a major corporatized seaport. India's transport structure is not dominated by railways to the extent stated, as rail share in freight and passenger movement is significantly lower.

78. (C) In Von Thunen's concentric zone model, land use is organized based on transport cost and perishability around the central market. Firewood and timber production is located in Zone II because wood is bulky and transport-intensive. Crop farming without fallow (intensive agriculture) occupies Zone III, where transport costs are moderate and land is used more intensively.

79. (D) The Command Area Development Programme was launched in 1974–75 to improve irrigation efficiency and agricultural productivity. The Desert Development Programme followed in 1977–78, focussing on arid and semi-arid regions. The National Capital Region was formally established with the NCR Planning Board Act, 1985. Later, the National Watershed Development Programme for Rainfed Areas was initiated in 1990–91 to promote sustainable land and water management. Thus, the correct chronological order is Command Area Development Programme Desert Development Programme National Capital Region National Watershed Development Programme for Rainfed Areas.

80. (D) In morphometric analysis, drainage frequency refers to the number of stream channels per unit area, while drainage density represents the total length of channels per unit area. Form factor is actually the ratio of basin area to the square of basin length, not related to altitudinal variation, and circulatory ratio is derived using basin area and perimeter, not maximum basin length.

81. (C) In Whittlesey's 1936 classification, agricultural systems that were predominantly associated with the less developed countries include shifting cultivation, pastoral nomadism and commercial plantation agriculture, all characterized by either low inputs, traditional techniques or colonies growing export crops in tropical regions. Commercial livestock ranching, in contrast, developed mainly in temperate grasslands of countries like the USA, Canada, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand and is typically treated as a form of extensive commercial farming of the more developed world.

82. (B) In cartographic and geomorphological analysis, an altimetric frequency curve is drawn by plotting the frequency of occurrence of particular elevation values (spot heights, summit levels, or highest points in grid squares) against their height above sea level. This technique shows how many hill summits or spot heights fall within successive altitude classes and is specifically used to study relief structure and erosion cycles from the frequency distribution of spot heights and hill summits.

83. (C) In Mackinder's geopolitical framework, Southeast Asia forms part of the Inner Crescent, which lies between the Heartland and the Outer Crescent. Thailand and Cambodia are located in this marginal belt surrounding the Eurasian core and have historically been zones of interaction and conflict among major powers.

84. (A) The Tokyo–Kawasaki–Yokohama industrial region forms the core of Japan's Keihin Industrial Zone, concentrated along the northwestern shore of Tokyo Bay. This industrial belt lies on the Kwanto Plain, Japan's largest lowland, whose extensive level land around Tokyo, Kawasaki, Yokohama and Chiba has long supported the country's most important urban-industrial concentration.

85. (C) In time-series analysis, a secular trend represents long-term changes such as population growth. Periodic variations show regular seasonal patterns, as seen in milk production. Cyclical variations of long duration reflect long-term fluctuations like climate change. Irregular variations are sudden and unpredictable events such as earthquakes.

86. (C) Strong and persistent westerly winds, known as jet streams, are found in the lower stratosphere. These winds flow from west to east due to sharp horizontal temperature and pressure gradients near the tropopause.

87. (A) The Berg wind is a hot, dry downslope local wind that blows from the interior plateau towards the coast of South Africa. The Zonda is a warm,

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dry foehn-type wind descending the eastern slopes of the Andes in Argentina. Samoon/Simoom is a very hot, dust-laden desert wind affecting parts of the Middle East, including Iran and neighbouring countries. The Sirocco is a warm wind originating over the Sahara and blowing across the Mediterranean into Southern Europe, strongly felt in Italy.

88. (C) The Kuroshio current originates near Taiwan and flows northward along the eastern coast of Japan, extending into higher latitudes of the North Pacific, which is often broadly described as reaching towards the Bering region. However, the Tsushima current is a warm branch of the Kuroshio that flows into the Sea of Japan and influences the climate of Japan, not Australia and it is not a cold current.
89. (C) The Enhanced Fujita (EF) Scale is a system for rating the intensity of tornadoes, from EF0 to EF5, based on the severity of damage to buildings, vegetation and other structures and the corresponding estimated wind speeds. It replaced the original Fujita F-scale in the United States in 2007 and is now the standard for classifying tornado strength in several countries.
90. (C) Hekistotherms are associated with extremely cold conditions and correspond to the polar climate. Mesotherms thrive under warm temperate rainy climates, while megatherms are characteristic of tropical rainy climates with high temperature and rainfall. Microtherms are adapted to cold forest climates of higher latitudes.
91. (C) Quantitative revolution phase models were grounded in assumptions such as economic rationality of man, isotropic space and perfect or near-perfect knowledge of the environment. These models largely operated at an aggregate or system level, explaining spatial patterns through generalized laws rather than individual decision-making. The explicit focus on the individual emerged later with the behavioural approach. Hence, the assumption of individual-level focus was not a basis of quantitative revolution models.
92. (B) Fred K. Schaefer strongly criticized the exceptionalist position of regional geography, particularly the views associated with Hartshorne. He argued that geography should move beyond description of unique regions and instead develop general laws, adopting the philosophy and methodology of positivism. His work laid an intellectual foundation for the quantitative revolution in geography.
93. (D) Behavioural geography focusses on how individuals perceive, interpret and respond to space, rejecting the assumption of perfect rationality. Mental maps represent the subjective spatial images held by individuals and are a core concept used to understand spatial decision-making under behaviouralism. Hence, mental maps are directly associated with behaviouralism in geography.
94. (B) *The Decision Process in a Spatial Context* (1964) was authored by Julian Wolpert and is regarded as a foundational work of behavioural geography. The paper challenged the assumption of perfect economic rationality and emphasized decision-making under conditions of limited information, marking a clear shift from normative to behavioural approaches in human geography.
95. (A) The earliest clear formulation of the two fold division of geography into systematic (general) and regional geography was given by Bernhardus Varenius in *Geographia Generalis* (1650). This work laid the foundation for separating general principles from regional description, a framework later refined by German geographers.
96. (C) Little Andaman, Great Nicobar and Car Nicobar are part of the Andaman–Nicobar island arc in the Bay of Bengal, formed mainly by tectonic processes along the subduction boundary between the Indo-Australian and Eurasian plates. Minicoy, by contrast, lies in the Lakshadweep group in the Arabian Sea and is an oceanic coral island (atoll) built primarily by coral growth on the Laccadive–Chagos submarine ridge, not by direct tectonic uplift of a continental or island-arc block.
97. (D) The Himalayas are classic young fold mountains formed during the Alpine orogeny in the Tertiary period of the Cenozoic Era, when the Indian Plate collided with the Eurasian Plate. Earlier orogenies such as Caledonian, Hercynian (Variscan) and the very old Precambrian events produced much older and now heavily eroded ranges, unlike the still-rising, rugged Himalayas.
98. (B) Relict mountains are remnants of ancient mountain systems that have been extensively denuded over geological time. The Eastern Ghats are discontinuous, highly eroded and composed of very old crystalline rocks, representing the worn-down remains of an ancient mountain system. In contrast, Pir Panjal, Mishmi Hills and Lusai Hills are part of younger tectonic mountain systems.
99. (A) The Gondwanaland supercontinent included the ancient, stable Indian Peninsular Plateau, whose detached northeastern fragment forms the Meghalaya (Shillong) Plateau. Kashmir Valley and Ladakh belong to the young Himalayan orogenic belt, while Andaman and Nicobar Islands are part of a separate tectonic island arc, so they were not parts of the original Gondwana shield.
100. (C) Glaciation occurs mainly in high-altitude Himalayan passes where snowfall and low temperatures allow ice formation. Nathu La, Zoji La and Rohtang Pass are located in the Himalayas and are prone to snow and glacial activity. Bhorghat, however, lies in the Western Ghats, which are much lower in height and do not experience glaciation.

P.Darpan

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Solved Model Paper

FORTHCOMING UPSC CIVIL SERVICES (Pre.) EXAMINATION

General Studies

1. With reference to Harappan Agricultural technologies, consider the following statements :
   I. The bull was known and archaeologists extrapolate from this that oxen were used for ploughing.
   II. Most Harappan sites are located in semi-arid lands, where irrigation was probably required for agriculture.
   III. Water reservoirs found in Banawali (Haryana) may have been used to store water for agriculture.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
   (A) Only I and II
   (B) Only II and III
   (C) Only I and III
   (D) All I, II and III

2. With reference to the Mauryan Empire, consider the following statements :
   I. There were five major political centres in the empire – the capital Pataliputra and the provincial centres of Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali and Suvarnagiri.
   II. All five major political centres are mentioned in Asokan inscriptions.
   III. Taxila and Ujjayini were situated on important long-distance trade routes.

   Which of the above statements are correct ?
   (A) Only I and II
   (B) All I, II and III
   (C) Only II and III
   (D) Only I and III

3. With reference to the social life of Ancient India, consider the following statements :
   I. Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras recognised as many as eight forms of marriage. Of these, the first four were considered as 'good' while the remaining were condemned.
   II. In Brahmanical theory, *jati* was based on birth.
   III. The Manusmriti laid down the 'duties' of the chandalas.

   Which of the above statements are correct ?
   (A) Only I and II
   (B) Only II and III
   (C) Only I and III
   (D) All I, II and III

4. Consider the following pairs :

Title/Nickname	Original Name
I. Kunika	—Ajatashatru
II. Shrenik	—Bimbisara
III. Amitraghat	—Bindusara

   Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched ?
   (A) Only I and II
   (B) Only II and III
   (C) Only I and III
   (D) All I, II and III

5. With reference to Buddha's teachings, consider the following statements :
   I. The Buddha's teachings have been reconstructed from stories, found mainly in the Sutta Pitaka.
   II. According to Buddha, the world is transient (anicca) and constantly changing; it is also soulless (anatta) as there is nothing permanent or eternal in it.
   III. According to Buddhist philosophy within this transient world, sorrow (dukkha) is intrinsic to human existence.

   Which of the statements given above are correct ?
   (A) Only I and II
   (B) Only II and III
   (C) Only I and III
   (D) All I, II and III

6. Match List-I with List-II :

List-I *(Year)*	List-II *(Major Developments in Harappan Archaeology)*
(a) 1960	1. B.B. Lal and B.K. Thapar begin excavations at Kalibangan.
(b) 1974	2. M.R. Mughal begins explorations in Bahawalpur.
(c) 1986	3. American team begins excavations at Harappa.
(d) 1990	4. R.S. Bisht begins excavations at Dholavira.

   Codes :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	3	1	2	4
(C)	4	2	1	3
(D)	1	3	4	2

7. With reference to the The term 'Hindu', consider the following statements :
   I. The term 'Hindu' was derived from an Old *Arabian* word, used c. sixth-fifth centuries BCE, to refer to the region east of the river Sindhu (Indus).
   II. The Arabs continued the Persian usage and called this region 'al-Hind' and its people 'Hindi'.
   III. Later the Turks referred to the people east of the Indus as 'Hindu', their land as 'Hindustan' and their language as 'Hindavi'.

   Which of the statements given above are correct ?
   (A) Only I and III
   (B) Only I and II
   (C) Only II and III
   (D) All I, II and III

8. Match List-I with List-II :

List-I *(Book)*	List-II
(a) Tajul Masir	
(b) Nuh Sipir	
(c) Rehla	
(d) Fatwa-e-Jahandari	

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List-II

(Author)

1. Amir Khusrau
2. Ibn Battuta
3. Ziauddin Barani
4. Hasan Nimazi

Codes :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	4	1	2	3
(B)	1	4	3	2
(C)	4	2	1	3
(D)	1	3	4	2

9. Match List-I with List-II regarding battles in Medieval India :

List-I

(Battle)

(a) Battle of Haldi Ghati
(b) Battle of Dharmat
(c) Battle of Devrai
(d) Battle of Khajua

List-II

(Year)

1. 1658 2. 1576
3. 1658 4. 1660

Codes :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	3	1	4
(B)	1	2	3	4
(C)	3	1	4	2
(D)	2	1	4	3

10. With reference to the economic critique of colonial rule developed by Indian nationalist thinkers in the late nineteenth century, which of the following statements is most appropriate ?
(A) It argued that India's poverty was primarily due to internal social customs and lack of industrial enterprise among Indians
(B) It maintained that the transfer of resources from India to Britain through administrative, military and commercial channels contributed significantly to India's economic stagnation
(C) It claimed that British investment in railways and plantations ensured equitable economic growth across Indian regions
(D) It rejected the idea that colonial trade policies had any major effect on Indian agriculture and handicrafts

11. With reference to the Shankaradeva, consider the following statements :
I. In the late 12th century, Shankaradeva emerged as one of the leading proponents of Vaishnavism in Assam.
II. His teachings, often known as the Bhagavati dharma because they were based on the Bhagavad Gita and the Bhagavata Purana, focussed on absolute surrender to the supreme deity, in this case Vishnu.
III. He emphasised the need for naam kirtan, recitation of the names of the lord in sat sanga or congregations of pious devotees.
Which of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only I, II and III
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and II
(D) None of the above

12. With reference to the Mughal Court, consider the following statements :
I. The Mir Bakhshi supervised the corps of court writers (waqia nawis) who recorded all applications and documents presented to the court and all imperial orders (farman).
II. Agents (wakil) of nobles and regional rulers recorded the entire proceedings of the court under the heading 'Akhbarat-i Darbar-i Mualla' with the date and time of the court session.
III. The Akhbarat contained all kinds of information such as attendance at the court, grant of offices and titles, diplomatic missions, presents received, or the enquiries made by the emperor about the health of an officer.
Which of the above are correct ?
(A) Only II and III
(B) Only I and II
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

13. With reference to the Non-Cooperation Movement, consider the following statements :
I. The Non-Cooperation Movement began in January 1921.
II. The movement started with middle-class participation in the cities.
III. The council elections were boycotted in most provinces except Madras, where the Justice Party, the party of the non-Brahmans, felt that entering the council was one way of gaining some power – something that usually only Brahmans had access to.
IV. The import of foreign cloth halved between 1921 and 1922, its value dropping from ₹ 240 crore to ₹ 120 crore.
Which of the statements given above are correct ?
(A) Only I, II and III
(B) Only II, III and IV
(C) Only I, III and IV
(D) All I, II, III and IV

14. Consider the following pairs :

Name of Treaty	Year
I. Treaty of Salbai	—1782
II. Treaty of Bassein	—1802
III. Treaty of Deogaon	—1803

Which of the above pairs are correctly matched ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

15. Which of the following movements began with the Salt March to Dandi led by Mahatma Gandhi ?
(A) Non-Cooperation Movement
(B) Civil Disobedience Movement
(C) Quit India Movement
(D) Khilafat Movement

16. With reference to the early phase of the Indian National Congress, consider the following statements :
I. The early Congress leaders believed in constitutional agitation rather than mass mobilisation.
II. They demanded immediate complete independence from British rule.
III. They relied on petitions, resolutions and public meetings to influence colonial policy.

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Which of the statements given above are correct ?

(A) Only I and III
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and II
(D) All I, II and III

17. Match the following leaders with the organisations they helped establish :

List-I

(a) Annie Besant
(b) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
(c) Jyotiba Phule
(d) M.G. Ranade

List-II

1. Home Rule League
2. Deccan Education Society
3. Satyashodhak Samaj
4. Prarthana Samaj

Codes :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	3	4	1
(B)	1	2	3	4
(C)	4	3	2	1
(D)	2	4	3	1

18. **Assertion (A) :** The Swadeshi Movement promoted indigenous industries in India.

Reason (R) : The movement encouraged the boycott of foreign goods and the use of locally produced products.

(A) Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) correctly explains (A)
(B) Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) does not explain (A)
(C) (A) is true, but (R) is false
(D) (A) is false, but (R) is true

19. With reference to Subhas Chandra Bose, consider the following statements :

I. He re-organised the Indian National Army with support from Japan.
II. He presided over the Haripura session of the Indian National Congress.
III. He reorganised the President of the Congress after the Tripuri session.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

20. Match the following movements with the regions where they emerged prominently :

List-I

(a) Bardoli Satyagraha
(b) Tebhaga Movement
(c) Moplah Rebellion
(d) Indigo Revolt

List-II

1. Gugarat
2. Bengal
3. Malabar
4. Bengal

Codes :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	2	3	4	1
(B)	1	2	3	4
(C)	4	3	2	1
(D)	2	4	3	1

21. Consider the following statements about the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) ?

I. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has recognized three GIAHS in India.
II. Globally, 104 GIAHS has been recognized in more than 30 countries.
III. The Koraput region in India is renowned for its paddy cultivation on highland slopes.
IV. Saffron Park of Kashmir represents a rich agro-pastoral system.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I, II and IV are correct
(B) Only II, III and IV are correct
(C) Only III and IV are correct
(D) All I, II, III and IV are correct

22. 'It is a crop of humid tropical climates, which requires well distributed rainfall of 2,500 m with no cloudiness. A mean maximum and minimum temperature of 34°C and 15°C and a mean relative humidity of 65% are required. The new grey alluvial soils of good depth, receiving silt from the annual floods are suitable for its cultivation.'

Which of the following crops is described above in the passage ?

(A) Rice (B) Sugarcane
(C) Jute (D) Tea

23. Which of the following are criteria for Census Town in India ?

I. A population density of at least 500 per sq. km.
II. A minimum population of 5000.
III. At least 75% of the total male population are engaged in non-agricultural activities.

How many of the above statements are correct ?

(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II
(C) All I, II and III
(D) None of the above

24. Which of the following statements are correct about the Strait of Hormuz, which was recently in news ?

I. It is the only sea passage connecting Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
II. Bandar Abbas is a port city located on the Strait of Hormuz.
III. Strait of Hormuz is bordered by Iran in the north, and Oman and UAE in the south.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I and II are correct
(B) Only I and III are correct
(C) Only I is correct
(D) All I, II and III are correct

25. Which of the following statements are correct ?

I. The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) Region extends 3,500 km over all or part of eight countries from Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east.
II. HKH is the source of ten large Asian river systems.
III. Nepal's Yala Glacier has shrunk by 66% since it was first measured in the 1970s.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) All I, II and III
(D) None of the above

26. Which of the following statements are correct about the geological history of India ?

I. Peninsular India, the old landmass, was formed with the formation of the Earth's crust.
II. The rise of the Himalayas took place during the tertiary period.

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III. The formation of the Indo-Gangetic plain took place during the Pleistocene period.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) All I, II and III
(D) None of the above

27. Identify the incorrect statement :
(A) Jhelum joins Chenab at Trimmu in Pakistan
(B) Chenab joins Sutlej at Panchnaad near Uch Sharif in Pakistan
(C) Ravi joins Chenab at Sarai Sindhu
(D) Spiti is the tributary of Ravi River

28. How many of the following are ideal conditions for the formation of an airmass ?
I. Uniform topography
II. Divergent airflow at the surface
III. High barometric pressure.
Choose the correct option :
(A) Only one
(B) Only two
(C) All three
(D) None of the above

29. 'They are under the influence of the Westerlies throughout the year. Adequate rainfall throughout the year with a tendency towards a mild winter or autumn maximum. Deciduous forests are the natural vegetation of this climate.'
Which of the following climatic types have been described above in the passage ?
(A) The Warm Temperate Eastern Margin Climate
(B) The Cool Temperate Western Margin (British Type) Climate
(C) The Warm Temperate Western Margin (Mediterranean) Climate
(D) The Cool Temperate Continental (Siberian) Climate

30. Consider the following statements :
I. Velliangiri Hills lies in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.
II. The Noyyal river originates from the Velliangiri Hills.
III. Noyyal is the tributary of Cauvery River.
IV. Coimbatore is located on the banks of the Cauvery River.
How many of the above statements are incorrect ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

31. Choose the correct pair of coal-mines and respective states in India :
(A) Rohne : Odisha
(B) Garjanbahal : Madhya Pradesh
(C) Sheetaldhara-Kurja : Jharkhand
(D) Gevra : Chhattisgarh

32. Consider the following statements :
I. Gold occurs as a placer deposit in alluvial plains.
II. Gypsum is formed as a result of evaporation in arid regions.
III. Bauxite is formed as a result of residual mass weathering.
Which of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

33. Consider the following statements :
I. Asia has the highest number of megacities in the world.
II. By 2050, 48% of the global population will be living in the cities.
III. India has five megacities and China has four megacities.
IV. Nine of the 10 most populous cities in 2025 are located in Asia.
How many of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

34. Consider the pair of cross-border railway lines of India :
I. Agartala-Akhaura : India-Bangladesh
II. Kokrajhar-Gelephu : India-Bhutan
III. Jaynagar-Bardibas : India-Nepal
IV. Munabao-Zero Point : India-Myanmar
How many of the above pairs are correctly matched ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

35. Consider the following pairs :
I. Sea floor spreading theory : 1967
II. Convectional Current theory : Arthur Holmes
III. Plate Tectonics Theory : 1912
IV. Continental Drift Theory : Arthur Holmes.
How many of the above pairs are correctly matched ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

36. Which of the following statements are correct ?
I. The Fazl Ali Commission recommended the reorganization of India into 16 states and three centrally-administered areas.
II. The States Reorganisation Act, 1956, reorganized India into 14 States and six Union Territories.
III. Currently, there are 28 States and 8 Union Territories in India.
Which of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only II and III
(B) Only III
(C) All I, II and III
(D) Only II

37. Which of the following statements are correct ?
I. The term 'secular' was added to the Preamble by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976.
II. The Supreme Court in S.R. Bommai case (1994) declared 'secularism' as part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
III. The Indian notion of secularism is based on French model of secularism.
Choose the correct option :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only I
(C) All I, II and III
(D) Only II

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38. How many of the following statements are correct ?
I. M.N. Roy put forward the idea of the Constituent Assembly in India for the first time in 1934.
II. Sir B.N. Rau was appointed as the Constitutional Advisor of the Constituent Assembly.
III. The appointment of the oldest member as the temporary President of the Constituent Assembly was based on the French practice.
IV. The last session of the Constituent Assembly was held on January 24, 1950.
Choose the correct option ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

39. The incorrectly matched pair is :
(A) Procedure for amending the Constitution : South Africa
(B) Administrative Details : Government of India Act, 1935
(C) Advisory Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court : USA
(D) Freedom of Inter-state Trade : Australia

40. Which of the following statements are correct ?
I. Under Article 94(c) of the Constitution, Lok Sabha Speaker can be removed through a resolution passed by majority of members in Lok Sabha present and voting.
II. Such resolution cannot be moved in the Lok Sabha without giving atleast 14-days' notice.
III. The Speaker is not entitled to participate in the proceedings of the Lok Sabha, when a removal motion is under discussion.
Choose the correct option :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II
(C) Only II and III
(D) All I, II and III

41. Consider the following statements :
I. The Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019, provides for the establishment of the Arbitration Council of India.
II. The Arbitration Council would be a seven-member body.
III. The functions of the Arbitration Council would be also to hold training, workshops and courses in the area of arbitration.
IV. India International Arbitration Centre is an independent and autonomous body for facilitating institutional arbitration including for international commercial arbitration.
How many of the following statements are correct ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

42. Consider the following statements :
I. Article 243M(1) of the Constitution of India excludes the application of the provisions of the Part IX of the Constitution to Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas.
II. The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA), was enacted on 24th December, 1996, to extend the framework of Part IX of the Constitution (73rd Amendment Act, 1992) to the Fifth Schedule Areas only.
III. Under PESA, prior approval of the Gram Sabha is mandatory for land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation in Fifth Scheduled Areas.
Which of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only III
(D) All I, II and III

43. Consider the following statements :
I. The Citizenship Act, 1955, has been amended five times.
II. The provisions of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, is not applicable in Sixth Schedule areas.
III. 'Inner Line' areas notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, is also exempted from the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.
Which of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II
(C) Only II and III
(D) All I, II and III

44. Consider the following :
I. Government and Parliament of India
II. Government and Legislature of the States
III. Local or other authorities
IV. Authorities under the control of the government of India.
How many of the above falls under the definition of 'the State' under Article 12 of the Constitution ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

45. Which of the following are correct about the *Jaya Thakur Vs. Union of India* case ?
I. The Supreme Court held that the right to dignified menstrual health is part of Article 21.
II. Lack of menstrual hygiene management impede the equality of opportunity.
III. Menstrual management measures are mandatory norms for schools under Section 19 of the RTE Act.
Choose the correct option :
(A) Only I
(B) Only I and II
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

46. Consider the following statements :
I. Rights under Article 17 is available against private individuals.
II. Rights under Article 14 is available to the citizens as well as foreigners.
III. Under Article 18, civil and military awards conferred by the President of India cannot be used as titles.
IV. Under Article 20, no person shall be prosecuted and punished for the same offence more than once.

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How many of the above statements are correct ?

(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

47. Consider the following pairs of writs under Article 32 and their applicability :

I. Habeas Corpus : Applicable to preventive detention.
II. Mandamus : Cannot be issued against private individual.
III. Prohibition : Can be issued against administrative and legislative authorities.
IV. Certiorari : It is preventive as well as curative.

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched ?

(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

48. Consider the following pairs of landmark judgements and their outcomes :

I. Champakam Dorairajan case : Fundamental Rights would prevail over DPSP.
II. Golaknath case : Parliament cannot amend the Fundamental Rights.
III. Kesavnanada Bharati case : Doctrine of Basic Structure.
IV. Minerva Mills case : Laws under Articles 39(b) and 39(c) protected from challenge under Articles 14 and 19.

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched ?

(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

49. Consider the following statements :

I. Article 164 provides for the appointment of Minister in charge of tribal affairs in State of Bihar.
II. The Constitution (Ninety-first Amendment) Act, 2003, fixes the maximum strength of the Council of Ministers at 15% of the total strength of Legislative Assembly of the State.
III. The minimum strength of the Council of Ministers shall not be less than twelve.
IV. Only the member of the Legislative Assembly is eligible to become minister in the State.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I, II and III are correct
(B) Only II and III are correct
(C) Only II is correct
(D) Only II, III and IV are correct

50. Choose the incorrect statement :

(A) The Parliament must ratify the proclamation of National Emergency within one month from the date of its issue
(B) The National Emergency can be extended for indefinite period with approval of Parliament after every 6 months
(C) The declaration of National Emergency is beyond judicial review
(D) Article 19 is automatically suspended during National Emergency declared on the grounds of war or external aggression

51. Central Government has the following options to manage the impact of increasing prices of crude oil in the wake of the US-Israel attack on Iran.

I. Cut Excise duty on fuels.
II. Pass on the price increase to consumers.
III. Fall back on the oil companies to absorb the shock.

Which of the above is the best suitable option for the Central government in the current domestic scenario ?

(A) Only I and III
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only III
(D) Only I

52. Consider the following statements in relation to recently changed guidelines on investments from countries sharing land border with India (LBCs) :

I. Investors with non-controlling LBC Beneficial Ownership of up to 26 per cent shall be permitted under the automatic route.
II. Proposals for LBC investments in specified sectors/activities of manufacturing in capital goods, electronic capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon and ingot-wafer, shall be processed and decided within 30 days.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

53. Which of the following facts is/are correct in relation to Priority Sector Lending (PSL) to agriculture sector ?

I. Commercial Banks including Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks, Local Area Banks and Primary (Urban) Cooperative Banks (UCBs) other than Salary Earners' Banks are mandated to allocate at least 18% of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) or Credit Equivalent of Off-Balance Sheet Exposures (CEOBSE), whichever is higher, to agriculture
II. Out of which a sub-target of 10 per cent is prescribed for Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs).

Correct code is :

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II is correct

54. Which of the following changes have been made in the estimation of Gross Domestic Product with base year 2022-23 ?

I. Data from the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) and the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is being used.
II. In revised series a detailed method (double deflation) of adjusting the GDP for price changes will be used for manufacturing sector in addition to agriculture sector.
III. Lower discrepancy through Supply and Use Tables.
IV. Segregation of multi-activity private corporations.
V. GST data, PFMS, e-Vahan are being used under new series.

How many statements given above are correct ?

(A) Only two (B) Only three
(C) Only four (D) All five

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55. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the working of Public Distribution System (PDS) in India ?
(A) In 2013, the Targeted PDS (TPDS) replaced the universal system
(B) Targeted PDS focusses on the poor by dividing households into Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) categories
(C) In 2000, the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) was introduced to support the poorest of the poor
(D) Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Anna Yojana is being implemented through public distribution system

56. Which of the following contributes significantly in the 'servicification' of manufacturing beyond direct cross-border delivery ?
I. Design
II. Research and Development (R&D)
III. Logistics
IV. Software development
V. Professional services
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only IV and V
(D) All I, II, III, IV and V

57. Consider the following statements in relation to NITI Aayog's Fiscal Heath Index 2026 :
I. The Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026 has evaluated the fiscal performance of states for FY 2024–25.
II. The index ranks Odisha, Goa, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh among the top 10 fiscally sound states in the country.
III. Among north-eastern and Himalayan states, Arunachal Pradesh topped the index, followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam and Mizoram.
IV. Punjab, West Bengal and Kerala remained at the bottom of the fiscal health rankings.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II, III and IV
(C) Only II and IV
(D) All I, II, III and IV

58. Consider the following facts in relation to 'National Monetisation Pipeline 2·0 (NMP 2·0)' :
I. NMP 2·0 has been has been developed by the Ministry of Finance in close collaboration of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
II. NMP 2·0 is based on the mandate for 'Asset Monetisation Plan 2025-30'.
III. The sectors included in NMP 2·0 are highways, railways, mines, telecom and tourism.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only II
(D) All I, II and III

59. Consider the following items of national income accounting :
I. Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices (GDPmp)
II. Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE)
III. Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE)
IV. Gross Capital Formation (GCF)
V. Net Exports
VI. Direct Taxes
Which of the following represents the Private Final Consumption Expenditure ?
(A) I-III-IV-V (B) I-IV-VI
(C) I-III-IV+VI (D) I-V

60. Which of the following is referred as the 'Additive Manufacturing' ?
(A) Collective manufacturing
(B) Cluster manufacturing
(C) 3D Printing
(D) Group manufacturing

61. The recently proposed ₹ 1 lakh crore Economic Stabilisation Fund is aimed at :
(A) Preparing for unforeseen economic shocks arising from the war in West Asia
(B) Preparing for unforeseen economic shocks arising from the rising inflation under the shadow of US-Israel-Iran war
(C) Preparing for any contingencies arising from increase in the current account deficit and fiscal deficit
(D) Preparing for adversities caused due to deficit monsoon rains

62. Despite being termed as a high-saving economy, capital formation may not result in significance increase in output due to ?
(A) High-capital output ratio
(B) Weak administrative machinery
(C) Higher level of transfer income
(D) High Population density

63. Which of the following statements is/are correct in respect of National small Saving Fund (NSSF) ?
I. All deposits received under National Saving Schemes are credited to the National Small Saving Fund (NSSF).
II. NSSF is a part of public account.
III. NSSF was established on April 1, 1999.
IV. Minimum 50% of the net collections in a State or Union Territory with legislature are being invested in special securities issued by the concerned State or Union Territory Government securities or lent to other Union/ or agencies fully owned by the Central Government.
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only I, II and III
(D) All I, II, III and IV

64. Open Market Operations (OMOs) include :
(A) Outright purchase/sale of Central government securities only by the Reserve Bank
(B) Outright purchase/sale of state government securities only by the Reserve Bank
(C) Outright purchase/sale of government securities as well as the securities of the listed Public Sector enterprises by the Reserve Bank

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(D) Outright purchase/sale of government securities by the Reserve Bank

65. Consider the following pairs in relation to derivatives :
I. Forwards : Unregulated and are traded over the counter
II. Futures : Regulated and traded on the stock exchanges.
III. Options : There is no obligation on the buyer to perform the contract.
IV. Swaps : Are generally used to manage interest rate and currency risk.
How many pairs given above are matched correctly ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

66. With reference to the 'State of India's Environment (SOE) 2026' report, consider the following statements :
I. The report is an annual publication of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (Mo EFCC).
II. According to the report, 7 out of the 9 identified 'Planetary Boundaries' have now been breached globally.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neithyer I nor II

67. The term 'Planetary Boundaries', recently in the news, includes which of the following processes ?
I. Ocean Acidification
II. Stratospheric Ozone Depletion
III. Atmospheric Aerosol Loading
IV. Change in Biosphere Integrity
Select the correct answer using the code given below :
(A) Only I, II and IV
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and IV
(D) All I, II, III and IV

68. Regarding the 'Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)', consider the following :
I. It is the only global convention specializing in the conservation of migratory species and their habitats.
II. The 'State of the World's Migratory Species 2026' report is a key output under this convention.
III. India is not a party to this convention.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I
(D) All I, II and III

69. With reference to the 'Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026', consider the following statements :
I. These rules integrate 'Circular Economy' principles as a core mandate for urban local bodies.
II. The rules introduce a legally binding 'Zero Waste' certification for all Indian metropolitan cities by 2030.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

70. Consider the following statements regarding the 'Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)' :
I. It is a statutory body established for air quality management in the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas.
II. Recent Supreme Court interventions have empowered the CAQM to take proactive punitive measures independently of State governments.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

71. The 'Global Plastic Treaty', currently under negotiation, aims to :
(A) Ban the production of all plastics by 2040
(B) Create a legally binding international instrument to end plastic pollution across the full lifecycle of plastic
(C) Establish a voluntary carbon-credit system for plastic recycling
(D) Shift the burden of plastic waste management solely to developing nations

72. Consider the following pairs of 'Species in News' and their 'Context' :
I. *Henckelia monophylla* : Rare plant rediscovered in Arunachal Pradesh after 189 years.
II. *Myiophanes kempi* : Assassin bug discovered in Andaman limestone caves.
III. *Osbeckia zubeengargiana* : A new parasitic wasp species discovered in Assam.
Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I
(D) All I, II and III

73. With reference to the 'Nagoya Protocol', consider the following statements :
I. It is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
II. It deals with the 'Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization'.
III. India has never submitted a National Report on its implementation until 2026.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only I and II
(C) Both II and III
(D) All I, II and III

74. Invasive species like *Lantana camara* are a major concern for India's biodiversity because :
I. They cover nearly 50% of India's forest and scrub-lands.
II. They are directly linked to rising human-wildlife conflicts, specifically tiger attacks, due to habitat pressure.

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Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

75. Regarding 'Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS)', consider the following statements :

I. It involves capturing CO_2 emissions from industrial sources and either using it or storing it underground.
II. NITI Aayog's 'Viksit Bharat' scenarios highlight CCUS as a critical technology for achieving Net Zero.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

76. With reference to 'Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)', consider the following statements :

I. It was introduced by India at COP26 in Glasgow.
II. It focuses on individual and community actions to protect the environment.
III. It is estimated to save global consumers approximately USD 440 billion by 2030.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

77. The 'National Adaptation Plan (NAP)', currently being developed by the MoEFCC, is a requirement under which international framework ?

(A) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
(B) Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC
(C) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
(D) Montreal Protocol

78. With reference to the 'LIGO-India' project, consider the following statements:

I. It is being established in the Hingoli district of Maharashtra as a collaboration between the DAE and DST.
II. Once operational, it will be the third node in the global gravitational-wave detection network after the US and Italy.
III. The observatory utilizes 4-km-long vacuum arms at right angles to detect ripples in space-time using laser interferometry.
IV. The project aims to improve source localization for gravitational waves, specifically in the Southern Hemisphere.

How many of the above statements are correct ?

(A) Only one
(B) Only two
(C) Only three
(D) All the four

79. With reference to Atomic Clocks and India's NavIC system, consider the following statements :

I. Atomic clocks measure time using the natural oscillations of atoms, typically using transition frequencies of caesium or rubidium.
II. A minimum of three operational satellites with functioning atomic clocks is sufficient to provide reliable 3D positioning services.
III. The IRNSS-1F satellite clock failure in 2026 occurred before the satellite could complete its designed mission life.
IV. NavIC relies on atomic clocks because even a one-nanosecond timing error can lead to significant positional inaccuracies.
V. Atomic clocks are used to define the international standard of time known as Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

(A) Only I, II and IV
(B) Only I, IV and V
(C) Only II, III and V
(D) Only I, III, IV and V

80. Consider the following statements regarding the India AI Impact Summit 2026 :

Statement I : India achieved a Guinness World Record during the summit for receiving the most pledges for an AI responsibility campaign within a 24-hour window.

Statement II : The "New Delhi Frontier AI Impact Commitments" were signed by 92 countries to mandate the democratic diffusion of AI and ensure sovereign compute capacity for developing nations.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements ?

(A) Both Statements I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I
(B) Both Statements I and Statement II are correct, but Statement II does not explain Statement I
(C) Statement I is correct, but Statement II is not correct
(D) Statement I is not correct, but Statement II is correct

81. Consider the following statements :

I. The quadrivalent HPV vaccine 'Gardasil' effectively prevents cervical cancer caused by HPV types which also includes types 16 and 18.
III. The national programme targets adolescent girls at age 14 to ensure long-lasting immunity before potential exposure to the infection.
III. Immunocompromised individuals and those with HIV can achieve comparable protection with a single-dose schedule as they do with multiple doses.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements ?

(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

82. In the context of the Gaganyaan Mission, what does the term 'Human-Rated Launch Vehicle (HLVM3)' refer to ?

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(A) A launch vehicle powered entirely by green hydrogen
(B) A modified LVM3 rocket equipped with a Crew Escape System and higher reliability standards
(C) A reusable launch vehicle designed for deep space exploration
(D) A satellite system meant for monitoring the health of astronauts in real-time

83. With reference to 'Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)', consider the following statements :
I. Kerala is the first Indian state to declare *Bacillus subtilis* as its 'state microbe' to promote antimicrobial stewardship.
II. AMR occurs only when humans misuse antibiotics, not in animals or plants.
III. The WHO refers to AMR as a 'silent pandemic'.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only III
(D) All I, II and III

84. With reference to Dimethyl Ether (DME) fuel, consider the following :
I. It is being developed as a cleaner alternative to LPG and Diesel.
II. It can be produced from biomass, coal and natural gas.
III. It emits significantly higher particulate matter compared to conventional diesel.
Which of the statements given above are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

85. Regarding India's 'Three-Stage Nuclear Power Program', consider the following :
I. The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam represents the second stage of the program.
II. The second stage uses Plutonium-239 as fuel to breed more fuel from Uranium-238.
III. Core loading at PFBR marks the completion of the third stage of the program.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

86. Which of the following is correct about the National Highways-Green Cover Index ?
I. NHAI partnered with ISRO's NRSC to develop a satellite-based Green Cover Index (GCI) for all National Highways.
II. It currently covers about 30,000 km of National Highways across 24 states.
III. Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) has been chosen to generate the Green Cover Index.
Choose the correct option :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only I
(D) All I, II and III

87. Consider the following statements about the Bascule Bridge which was recently in news ?
I. Bascule Bridge can be raised to provide clearance for waterway traffic.
II. Recently, the Union Government approved the renovation of the historic Bascule Bridge at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata.
III. The word 'Bascule' is French in origin.
IV. The longest double-leaf bascule bridge in the world is the Broadway Bridge in Portland, Oregon, USA.
Which of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II
(C) Only I, II and III
(D) All I, II, III and IV

88. Which of the following are correct about the arms imports of India ?
I. India is the second largest arms importer in the world.
II. India's arms import increased between 2016–20 and 2021–25.
III. Russia is the largest supplier of arms to India.
Choose the correct option :
(A) Only I
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only III
(D) All I, II and III

89. Consider the following statements :
I. Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action (ASMITA) initiative was started in 2021.
II. It is part of Khelo India's gender-neutral mission.
III. The Khelo India ASMITA league is a core component of the 'Khelo Bharat Niti.'
Which of the following statements are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only I and II
(C) All I, II and III
(D) Only II and III

90. Consider the following statements :
I. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) launched the Lighting a Billion Lives (LaBL) campaign in 2008.
II. LaBL 2·0 is a next-generation decentralised renewable energy (DRE) programme aimed at expanding clean energy access.
III. At the core of LaBL 2·0 is the focus on livelihood empowerment.
Which of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I
(D) All I, II and III

91. Which of the following is correct about the Gravity Bomb ?
I. It does not possess an internal propulsion system or engine.
II. It relies on the momentum of aircraft to reach its target.
Which of the above statements are correct ?
(A) Only I
(B) Only II
(C) Both I and II
(D) Neither I nor II

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92. Which of the following is correct about the Global Engagement Scheme ?

I. It is implemented by the Union Ministry of External Affairs.

II. The primary objectives of the Scheme include strengthening cultural ties with foreign nations, promoting bilateral cultural contacts, projecting India's cultural identity on the world stage and encouraging inbound tourism.

III. It has three components: Festival of India (FoI); Grant in aid to Indo Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies and Contributions to Inter-governmental organizations.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I
(B) Only I and II
(C) Only II and III
(D) All I, II and III

93. Consider the following statements :

I. Union Budget 2025–26 provides a total budgetary provision of ₹ 20,000 crore for the research, design, development and deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).

II. The Government aims for 100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2070.

III. Bharat Small Modular Reactor is being jointly designed and developed by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL).

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only II and III
(D) All I, II and III

94. Consider the following :

I. Development of Technologies for Deep-sea mining.

II. Development of Ocean Climate Change Advisory Services.

III. Technological Innovations for exploration and conservation of deep-sea biodiversity.

IV. Deep-ocean survey and exploration.

V. Energy and fresh water from the ocean.

VI. Establishment of Advanced Marine Station for Ocean Biology.

Which of the above are verticals of the Deep Sea Mining ?

(A) Only I, II, III and IV
(B) Only I, III, IV, V and VI
(C) Only I, III, V and VI
(D) All I, II, III, IV, V and VI

95. Consider the following statements :

I. India's average temperature has risen by around 0·7°C during 1901–2018.

II. In the recent 30-year period (1986–2015), temperatures of the warmest day and the coldest night of the year have risen by about 0·63°C and 0·4°C, respectively.

III. Sea-level rise in the North Indian Ocean (NIO) occurred at a rate of 1·06–1·75 mm per year during 1874–2004.

IV. The Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) experienced a temperature rise of about 1·3°C during 1951–2014.

How many of the above statements are correct ?

(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

96. Which of the following ports has become the first port in India to launch the Digital Twin initiative ?

(A) Kandla Port
(B) Paradip Port
(C) Vizhinjam Port
(D) V.O. Chidambaranar Port

97. Consider the following statements in relation with the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA), which was recently in news ?

I. It will comprise of seven districts of Nagaland.

II. The mini-Secretariat of the FNTA will be headed by the Additional Chief Secretary or Principal Secretary.

III. Formation of FNTA has significant impact on Article 371(A).

Which of the above statements are correct ?

(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II
(C) Only I
(D) All I, II and III

98. PRAHAAR, which was recently in news, is :

(A) Tri-Service Exercise of the Indian Armed Forces
(B) India's National Counter-terrorism policy
(C) India's military doctrine for cyberspace operations
(D) India's Defence Space agency for managing space-based military assets

99. Which of the following is correct about the New START Treaty ?

I. Russia suspended its participation in New START in February 2026.

II. The treaty officially expired on February 5, 2026.

II. It was the nuclear arms treaty signed between Russia and the United States.

IV. The treaty limited the deployment of strategic nuclear warheads for each party to 1500.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I, II and III
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only II, III and IV
(D) Only II and IV

100. Which of the following is correct about the Vibrant Village Programme 2·0 ?

I. It was launched in February 2026 in Nathanpur Village of Assam.

II. It is a Central Sector Scheme, with an outlay of ₹ 6839 Crore till FY 2028-29.

III. The programme shall be implemented in select strategic villages in 15 States and 2 UTs.

IV. Four thematic areas of the programme are: all-weather road connectivity, telecom connectivity, television connectivity and electrification.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I, II and IV
(B) Only I, III and IV
(C) Only II and III
(D) All I, II, III and IV

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	6	A	B	C	D	31	A	B	C	D	56	A	B	C	D	81	A	B	C	D
	7	A	B	C	D	32	A	B	C	D	57	A	B	C	D	82	A	B	C	D
	8	A	B	C	D	33	A	B	C	D	58	A	B	C	D	83	A	B	C	D
	9	A	B	C	D	34	A	B	C	D	59	A	B	C	D	84	A	B	C	D
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	12	A	B	C	D	37	A	B	C	D	62	A	B	C	D	87	A	B	C	D
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	16	A	B	C	D	41	A	B	C	D	66	A	B	C	D	91	A	B	C	D
	17	A	B	C	D	42	A	B	C	D	67	A	B	C	D	92	A	B	C	D
	18	A	B	C	D	43	A	B	C	D	68	A	B	C	D	93	A	B	C	D
	19	A	B	C	D	44	A	B	C	D	69	A	B	C	D	94	A	B	C	D
Signature of Invigilator	20	A	B	C	D	45	A	B	C	D	70	A	B	C	D	95	A	B	C	D
	21	A	B	C	D	46	A	B	C	D	71	A	B	C	D	96	A	B	C	D
	22	A	B	C	D	47	A	B	C	D	72	A	B	C	D	97	A	B	C	D
	23	A	B	C	D	48	A	B	C	D	73	A	B	C	D	98	A	B	C	D
	24	A	B	C	D	49	A	B	C	D	74	A	B	C	D	99	A	B	C	D
	25	A	B	C	D	50	A	B	C	D	75	A	B	C	D	100	A	B	C	D

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Answers with Hints

1. (A) Most Harappan sites are located in semi-arid lands, where irrigation was probably required for agriculture. It is also likely that water drawn from wells was used for irrigation. Besides, water reservoirs found in Dholavira (Gujarat) may have been used to store water for agriculture.
2. (B) There were five major political centres in the empire – the capital Pataliputra and the provincial centres of Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali and Suvarnagiri, all mentioned in Asokan inscriptions. These centres were carefully chosen, both Taxila and Ujjayini being situated on important long-distance trade routes, while Suvarnagiri (literally, the golden mountain) was possibly important for tapping the gold mines of Karnataka.
3. (D) Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras recognised as many as eight forms of marriage. Of these, the first four were considered as 'good' while the remaining were condemned. It is possible that these were practised by those who did not accept Brahmanical norms. In Brahmanical theory, jati, like varna, was based on birth. However, while the number of varnas was fixed at four, there was no restriction on the number of jatis. The Manusmriti laid down the 'duties' of the Chandalas.
4. (D)
5. (D) According to Buddhist philosophy, the world is transient (anicca) and constantly changing; it is also soulless (anatta) as there is nothing permanent or eternal in it. Within this transient world, sorrow (dukkha) is intrinsic to human existence. It is by following the path of moderation between severe penance and self-indulgence that human beings can rise above these worldly troubles. In the earliest forms of Buddhism, whether or not god existed was irrelevant.
6. (A)
7. (C) The term 'Hindu' was derived from an Old Persian word, used c. sixth-fifth centuries BCE, to refer to the region east of the river Sindhu (Indus). The Arabs continued the Persian usage and called this region 'al-Hind' and its people 'Hindi'. Later the Turks referred to the people east of the Indus as 'Hindu', their land as 'Hindustan', and their language as 'Hindavi'. None of these expressions indicated the religious identity of the people. It was much later that the term developed religious connotations.
8. (A) 9. (A)
10. (B) Indian nationalist economists such as Dadabhai Naoroji, R.C. Dutt and M.G. Ranade argued that colonial rule caused a systematic drain of wealth from India to Britain. This occurred through mechanisms such as home charges, salaries of British officials, profits of British enterprises and remittances. According to this critique, the continuous outflow of resources weakened India's capital base and hindered economic development, making the drain theory a central argument in nationalist economic thought.
11. (B) In the late fifteenth century, Shankaradeva emerged as one of the leading proponents of Vaishnavism in Assam. He also encouraged the establishment of satra or monasteries for the transmission of spiritual knowledge, and naam ghar or prayer halls. His major compositions include the Kirtana-ghosha.
12. (D) The keeping of exact and detailed records was a major concern of the Mughal administration. The Mir Bakhshi supervised the corps of court writers (waqia nawis) who recorded all applications and documents presented to the court, and all imperial orders (farman). In addition, agents (wakil) of nobles and regional rulers recorded the entire proceedings of the court under the heading "News from the Exalted Court" (Akhbarat-i Darbar-i Mualla) with the date and time of the court session (pahar). The Akhbarat contained all kinds of information such as attendance at the court, grant of offices and titles, diplomatic missions, presents received, or the enquiries made by the emperor about the health of an officer. This information is valuable for writing the history of the public and private lives of kings and nobles.
13. (A) The effects of non-cooperation on the economic front were more dramatic. Foreign goods were boycotted, liquor shops picketed and foreign cloth burnt in huge bonfires. The import of foreign cloth halved between 1921 and 1922, its value dropping from ₹ 102 crore to ₹ 57 crore.
14. (D) 15. (B)
16. (A) The early Congress (1885–1905), led by Moderates like Dadabhai Naoroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale, relied on constitutional methods such as petitions and dialogue with the British. Their objective was administrative reform and greater Indian participation in governance, not immediate independence.
17. (B)
18. (A) The Swadeshi Movement (1905–08), initiated in response to the partition of Bengal, encouraged Indians to boycott British goods and support indigenous production. This helped promote local industries, national education and economic self-reliance.
19. (A) Subhas Chandra Bose presided over the Haripura session of Congress in 1938. However, after disagreements with the Congress leadership, he resigned following the Tripuri session.
20. (A)
21. (C) The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has recognized 104 GIAHS in 29 countries

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(as on March 11, 2026). India currently hosts three Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) : the Koraput region in Odisha, the Kuttanad farming system in Kerala, and the Saffron Heritage of Kashmir.

22. (C)

23. (B) To be designated a Census Town, a settlement must simultaneously meet three criteria : a minimum population of 5,000, at least 75% of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits, and a population density of at least 400 persons per sq. km.

24. (D)

25. (C) Earth's mountains have lost close to nine trillion tonnes of ice since records began in 1975 – the equivalent of a 2·72-metre-thick block of ice the size India. Yala glacier, one of Nepal's most extensively studied glaciers, is expected to vanish by the 2040s.

26. (C)

27. (D) Spiti is the tributary of Sutlej River.

28. (C) 29. (B)

30. (A) Coimbatore is situated on the banks of the Noyyal River.

31. (D) Rohne (Jharkhand), Garjanbahal (Odisha), Sheetaldhara-Kurja (Madhya Pradesh) and Gevra (Chhattisgarh) are some of the major coal mines in India.

32. (D) 33. (D)

34. (C) Munabao (India)-Zero Point (Pakistan) is the cross-border rail link which is currently inactive.

35. (B) Seafloor Spreading Theory (1961, Harry Hess); Plate Tectonics Theory (1967, Mckenzie, Parker, And Morgan).

36. (C)

37. (A) Western democracies like France follows negative secularism strict separation of state from religion which is different from Indian approach, which is based on 'Principled Distance'—The state is not completely detached from religion; it can intervene to ensure equality and social justice.

38. (D)

39. (C) The advisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, provided in the Constitution of India, has been inspired from Canada.

40. (B) Under Article 94(c) of the Constitution, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha can be removed through a resolution passed by majority of all the then members of the Lok Sabha. While a removal motion is under discussion, the Speaker continues in office and, as a Member of the Lok Sabha, retains the right to participate and speak in the proceedings. The Speaker is entitled to vote in the first instance on the resolution or related matters, but cannot exercise a casting vote in the event of tie.

41. (D) The Arbitration Council of India has not been constituted as yet. The India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019, has been enacted, leading to the establishment of the India International Arbitration Centre.

42. (D) 43. (D)

44. (D) *Pradeep Kumar Biswas Vs. Indian Institute of Chemical Biology* (2002) is the landmark Supreme Court judgement that significantly enlarged and settled the definition of 'State' under Article 12. It established that bodies financially, functionally, and administratively dominated by the government, or under its 'deep and pervasive control', are considered 'State'.

45. (D) 46. (D)

47. (C) Prohibition cannot be issued against administrative and legislative authorities.

48. (D)

49. (B) Article 164 provides for the appointment of Minister in charge of tribal affairs in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. Member of either Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council is eligible to become minister in the State.

50. (C) The 44th Amendment Act, 1978, restored the power of judicial review over the declaration of national emergency.

51. (C) The Centre may prefer the last option as it is the least disruptive in the immediate context and there is precedent. The five national oil companies together have cash in hand of ₹ 95,000 crore (trailing 12 months to December 2025) but they also have net debt of about ₹ 4·23 lakh crore. And these companies are listed, with public shareholders. The option, therefore, can offer only limited comfort.

52. (D) The Union Cabinet on March 10, 2026 has approved change in guidelines on investments from countries sharing land border with India (LBCs). Investors with non-controlling LBC Beneficial Ownership of up to 10 per cent shall be permitted under the automatic route as per the applicable sectoral caps, entry routes, attendant conditions. Proposals for LBC investments in specified sectors/ activities of manufacturing in capital goods, electronic capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon and ingotwafer, shall be processed and decided within 60 days.

53. (C) In terms of extant guidelines on Priority Sector Lending (PSL) issued by RBI, Commercial Banks including Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks, Local Area Banks and Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) other than Salary Earners' Banks are mandated to allocate at least 18% of their Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) or Credit Equivalent of Off-Balance Sheet Exposures (CEOBSE), whichever is higher, to agriculture, out of which a sub-target of 10 per cent is prescribed for Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs).

54. (D)

55. (A) In 1997, the Targeted PDS (TPDS) replaced the universal system, focussing on the poor by dividing households into Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) categories.

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56. (D) Beyond direct cross-border delivery, services are increasingly integrated into manufacturing through activities such as design, R&D, logistics, software development and professional services, reflecting the growing 'servicification' of production systems. This is evident in products such as smart devices, whose value is driven bysoftware ecosystems; medical equipment/wearables bundled with diagnostic and remote-monitoring services; and automobiles, which are increasingly described as 'software on wheels'.

57. (B) The Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026 evaluated the fiscal performance of States for FY 2023-24.

58. (C) The second phase of the National Monetisation pipeline has been developed by NITI Aayog, in consultation with infrastructure line ministries, based on the mandate for 'Asset Monetisation Plan 2025-30' as announced in the Union Budget 2025-26. The sectors included in NMP 2·0 are highways (including MMLPs, ropeways), railways, power, petroleum and natural gas, civil aviation, ports, warehousing and storage, urban infrastructure, coal, mines, telecom and tourism.

59. (A) Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) refers to the total value of all goods and services consumed by households and private entities. It is a major component of GDP or National Income calculations. PFCE = Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices (GDPmp) – Government Final Consumption Expenditure – Gross Capital Formation – Net Exports.

60. (C) Additive Manufacturing (AM), commonly known as 3D printing, is an industrial process that creates three-dimensional objects by depositing materials, such as plastics, metals, or ceramics, layer-by-layer based on digital CAD models. Unlike subtractive manufacturing, it minimizes waste, enables complex, lightweight designs, and supports rapid prototyping and on-demand production for industries like aerospace and medical.

61. (A) As on March 17, 2026, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that centre gave over ₹ 57,381 crore for Economic Stabilisation Fund.

62. (A) Despite being a high-saving economy, capital formation may not significantly increase output primarily due to a high Capital-Output Ratio (COR) or Incremental Capital-Output Ratio (ICOR). This means that more capital is needed to produce a single unit of output, indicating lower capital productivity and inefficient investment, leading to slower growth.

63. (D) All deposits received under National Saving Schemes are credited to the National Small Saving Fund (NSSF) - a public account established *w.e.f* 1.4.1999. After implementation of 14th Finance Commission, State Government except Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh have withdrawn from NSSF loans accumulation in the fund is being invested in Central Government Securities, Infrastructure Companies, agencies fully owned by Central Government or Public Sector Undertaking as decided by the Central Government from time to time.

64. (D)

65. (D) A forward contract is an over-the-counter (OTC) instrument customized between two parties to buy or sell an asset at a specified price on a future date. Futures are standardized financial derivative contracts obligating parties to buy or sell an underlying asset—such as commodities, stocks, or currencies—at a predetermined price on a specified future date. Options are financial derivatives granting the buyer the right—but not the obligation—to buy (call) or sell (put) an underlying asset at a set price before a specific date, offering leverage, income and hedging capabilities. They are primarily used for hedging risks or speculating on interest rates, currencies, or commodities, rather than trading on an exchange.

66. (B) The State of India's Environment (SOE) report is an annual publication of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a non-profit organization.

67. (D) The Planetary Boundaries framework, developed by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, identifies nine processes that regulate the Earth's stability. All four listed—Ocean Acidification, Stratospheric Ozone Depletion, Atmospheric Aerosol Loading, and Biosphere Integrity—are core components. The 2026 SOE report emphasizes that crossing these thresholds risks triggering irreversible environmental shifts.

68. (A) The CMS (Bonn Convention) is the only global treaty dedicated to migratory species and their habitats. Statement II is correct as the 2026 report is a Central assessment of the convention. Statement III is incorrect because India is a very active party to the CMS and even hosted the COP13 in Gandhinagar.

69. (A) The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 mandate urban local bodies to adopt Circular Economy principles, focusing on waste-to-wealth and resource recovery. However, statement II is incorrect because, while the rules encourage 'Zero Waste' goals, there is currently no legally binding certification for all metropolitan cities by 2030.

70. (C)

71. (B) The Global Plastic Treaty is a historic, legally binding international agreement aimed at ending plastic pollution. It addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, from production and design to waste management, rather than just focussing on recycling or voluntary measures.

72. (A) Pair III is incorrectly matched because Osbeckia zubeen-

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gargiana is actually a newly discovered plant species (named after singer Zubeen Garg) found in Assam, not a parasitic wasp.

73. (B) India submitted its first National Report on the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on February 27, 2026.

74. (C)

75. (C) CCUS is a dual-process technology that captures CO_2 from heavy industries like steel and cement, then either repurposes it for industrial use or stores it in deep geological formations. NITI Aayog identifies CCUS as a 'hard-to-abate' sector essential for India's 'Viksit Bharat' vision and Net Zero 2070 goal.

76. (D) Mission LiFE was introduced by India at COP26 to shift the focus from macro-policy to individual and community-led sustainable actions. It promotes 'Pro-Planet People' by encouraging mindful consumption. It was launched in October 2022, at the Statue of Unity in Kevadia, Gujarat

77. (B) The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) is a key requirement under the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC). It helps developing countries like India identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs and implement strategies to build resilience against climate change impacts.

78. (C) Statement II is incorrect because LIGO-India will be the 5th node in the global network, joining existing facilities in the USA (two), Italy (Virgo), and Japan (KAGRA).

79. (B) Statement II is incorrect because a minimum of four satellites is required for 3D positioning (latitude, longitude, altitude, and time). Statement III is incorrect because IRNSS-1F, launched in 2016, completed its ten-year mission life exactly when the clock failed in March 2026.

80. (C) Statement I is accurate as India secured a Guinness World Record with over 2·5 lakh pledges for responsible AI. However, Statement II is incorrect; the Frontier AI Impact Commitments were specifically announced by 13 leading model developers, not by a collective of 92 nations.

81. (A) Statement III is incorrect because, while a single dose suffices for healthy individuals, those who are immunocompromised or HIV-positive require two or three doses to achieve comparable protection levels.

82. (B) The HLVM3 is a human-rated version of the LVM3 rocket, which integrates a Crew Escape System (CES) to ensure astronaut safety during any flight emergencies.

83. (B) Statement II is incorrect because AMR occurs naturally and is accelerated by antibiotic misuse not just in humans, but also in agriculture, livestock and poultry.

84. (A) Statement III is incorrect because DME actually emits significantly lower particulate matter and sulfur oxides, making it more environmentally friendly than conventional diesel.

85. (A) The PFBR at Kalpakkam is the cornerstone of India's second stage, which utilizes Plutonium-239 to convert Uranium-238 into more fissile material. Statement III is incorrect because core loading at the PFBR signifies a transition into the second stage; the third stage, which focusses on utilizing India's vast Thorium reserves, has not yet been completed.

86. (D) 87. (D)

88. (B) According to the report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India continues to be the world's second largest arms importer, though imports declined marginally (–4·0 per cent) between 2016–20 and 2021-25.

89. (C) 90. (D) 91. (C)

92. (C) Ministry of Culture implements 'Global Engagement Scheme' to promote India's rich cultural heritage internationally and enhance India's global image.

93. (B) The Government has drawn up a roadmap for reaching the 100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047 as announced in the nuclear energy mission.

94. (D) 95. (D)

96. (D) The V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority has achieved a major technological milestone by becoming the first port in India to launch the Digital Twin initiative for port management.

97. (B) The Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) will comprise six districts of Nagaland. The agreement for the creation of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) does not affect the provisions of the Article 371(A).

98. (B) On February 23, 2026, the Union Home Ministry unveiled India's inaugural National Counter-Terrorism Policy and Strategy, named 'PRAHAAR', which establishes a structured framework to address complex security threats.

99. (B) In February 2023, Russia officially suspended its participation in New START treaty. Signed between US and Russia in 2010, it entered into force in 2011. The treaty limited the deployment of strategic nuclear warheads for each party to 1550.

100. (D) The Vibrant Village Programme 2·0 shall be implemented in select strategic villages in the States/UTs of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, J&K (UT), Ladakh (UT), Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The objective of the programme is to create better living conditions and adequate livelihood opportunities to ensure prosperous and safe borders, control trans-border crime and assimilate the border population with the nation and inculcate them 'as eyes and ears of the border guarding forces', crucial for internal security.

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Test Your Knowledge

Answers with Hints

1. (C) A data by Reuters showed that in 2025, the Strait of Hormuz was the world's second busiest oil shipping chokepoint, handling about 2·5 million metric tonnes of oil daily. Only the strait of Malacca handled more, at around 3·3 million metric tonnes per day.
2. (A) The Shiite militia group, Saraya Awliya al-Dam is operating in Iraq following the 2003 US-led invasion of the Iraq that toppled Saddam Hussain.
3. (C) On June 22, 2025 the US Air Force and Navy attacked three nuclear sites in Iran under the code name Operation Midnight Hammer. The Fordow Uranium Enrichment Plant, the Natanj Nuclear Facility and the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Centre were targeted.
4. (D) Four Lok Sabha Speakers—G. V. Mavlankar (1954), Hukum Singh (1966), Balram Jakhar (1987) and Om Birla (2026) had faced no-confidence motions in the history of Lok Sabha, which were negativated.
5. (A) Naveen Patnaik (March 2000 to June 2024 : 24 years 99 days); Jyoti Basu (June 1977 to November 2000 : 23 years and 137 days); Gegong Apang between 1980 to 2007); Lal Thanhawla (Between 1984 and 2018). Pawan Kumar Chamling (December 1994-May 2019) is the longest serving CM in India
6. (B) The Paris Principles are a set of standards, for National Human Rights Commissions developed by the United Nations in 1993. These were subsequently endorsed by the UNGA in 1993. Key pillars of the Paris Principles are Pluralism, independence and effectiveness.
7. (B) The motion for removal may be introduced in either House of Parliament. The motion must have signatures of at least 100 MPs of Lok Sabha and 50 MPs of Rajya Sabha. According to the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, if the notice for the motion is given on the same day in both Houses of the Parliament, no committee shall be constituted unless the motion has been admitted in both Houses. After the motion has been admitted in both houses, a committee shall be constituted jointly by the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Chairman of Rajya Sabha. The committee will consists of the Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court Judge, the Chief Justice of one of the 25 High Courts and a distinguish jurist.
8. (D) 9. (A) 10. (B) 11. (C)
12. (A) Since 2017, Jharkhand (2017), Uttarakhand (2018), Himachal Pradesh (2019), Uttar Pradesh (2020), Gujarat and MP (2021), Haryana and Karnataka (2022) and Rajasthan (2025) have enacted laws to regulate the religious conversion. Recently, State Legislative Assemblies of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra have passed such bills.
13. (A) Dakshayani Velayudhan was born on 15 July, 1912 in Mulavukad (Kerala) and belonged to Dalit Pulaya Community. She was elected to the Constituent Assembly of India, at the age of 34, from the Madras Constituency.
14. (D) 15. (C)
16. (A) Ancient Place of Shey is located in Leh (Ladakh). It was built in 1655 by King Deldan Namgyal. It is renowned for its three-story copper-glided gold Buddha statue, the hilltop ruins offer panoramic Indus Valley views and traditional Tibetan architecture.
17. (C) Khasi Rebellion was coordinated by the Raja of Nuklon Tirot Singh.
18. (B) Sangat Sabha, or 'Believers Association' was founded by social reformer Keshab Chandra Sen to promote mutual spiritual intercourse, devotion and social reforms.
19. (D) 20. (C) 21. (D) 22. (D)
23. (B) Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve is a premier protected area in Tamil Nadu's Erode district. It serves as a critical junction between Western and Eastern Ghats.
24. (C)
25. (A) Lake Faguibine is a large, historically fertile, and formerly flooded lake system located west of Timbuktu in Northern Mali. It has been largely dry since the 1970s because of severe droughts. As a result it has now turned into a desert.
26. (B)
27. (B) The UT of Puducherry consists of four small geographically separated districts located across three different states. Puducherry and Karaikal in Tamil Nadu; Yemen in Andhra Pradesh and Mahe in Kerala.
28. (C) Under Article 88 of the Indian Constitution, the Attorney General of India has the right to speak and participate in the proceedings of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha as well as any committee of Parliament he is named a member of. However, he is not entiled to vote in any of them.
29. (B) 30. (D) 31. (A) 32. (C)
33. (D) Sound can be produced by vibrating strings (as in a Sitar), by vibrating air columns (as in a Flute), by vibrating stretched membrances (as in a drum) and by vibrating plates (as in cymbals).
34. (C) 35. (A) 36. (C) 37. (D)
38. (C) Sahiwal is an indigenous breed of cow.
39. (A) Internal vacuum is not required in light microscope.
40. (D)

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Essay Contest

No Pressure, No Diamonds

—Mahesh Kumar

"A diamond is merely a piece of coal that handled stress exceptionally well." This popular, yet profound sentiment highlights a fundamental truth about human development : Greatness is rarely born in comfort. Just as raw carbon requires immense pressure, heat and intensity to transform into a diamond; human character requires challenges, discipline, perseverance and resilience for true development.



Mahesh Kumar

The saying 'No pressure, No diamonds' is often attributed to the Scottish philosopher, essayist and historian Thomas Carlyle. At its core, the saying suggests that outstanding achievements are only possible through hard work, dedication and perseverance in the face of adversity. Diamonds, after all, are formed under intense pressure over long periods and this same kind of pressure can inspire people to achieve greatness.

There are many examples throughout history of individuals who have faced incredible challenges and achieved great things despite them. One example is Helen Keller, who lost her sight and hearing after battling an illness at 19 months. Yet, despite these challenges, she became a world famous author, speaker and political activist, advocating for the rights of the people with disabilities and inspiring millions worldwide. Another example is Thomas Edison, who failed over 10,000 times before finally inventing the lightbulb. When asked about his significant number of failures, Edison famously said, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Edison's persistence and willingness to endure repeated failures ultimately led to one of the most significant technological advancements of the 19th century.

History and everyday life provide many more examples that prove the truth of the saying, "No pressure, no diamonds." Students often discover their true potential when they face the pressure of examinations, which encourages them to work harder and manage their time wisely. In the world of sports, legendary players achieve greatness by performing under intense expectations and competition. For instance, Sachin Tendulkar played many crucial matches where immense pressure pushed him to deliver extraordinary performances. Similarly great leaders are often shaped during times of struggle. Mahatma Gandhi faced imprisonment, hardships and challenges during the freedom movement, yet those difficulty strengthened his determination and moral courage. In the field of science as well, perseverance under pressure has led to remarkable discoveries. Even in nature, we find similar lessons. A seed must push through the hard soil to grow into a strong plant and a butterfly must struggle to emerge from its cocoon before, it can fly. In the same way, human beings grow stronger, wiser and more capable, when they face challenges with courage and determination. These examples clearly show that pressure and difficulties are not meant to defeat us; rather they shape our character and help us shine like diamonds.

The saying, 'No pressure, No diamonds' expresses a deep philosophical truth about human life and growth. Just as a diamond is formed when raw carbon undergoes immense pressure and heat deep within the Earth, human character too is shaped through struggle, hardship and perseverance. Comfort and ease may provide temporary happiness, but they rarely lead to true strength or wisdom. It is the moments of challenge, uncertainty and difficulty that test our patience, determination, and courage. Philosophically, many thinkers have believed that adversity is the greatest teacher of life. Difficulties force individuals to reflect, adapt and discover their inner potential. Without challenges, life would remain stagnant and human abilities would remain hidden. Pressure acts like a refining fire that removes weakness and reveals resilience, discipline and maturity. In this sense, pressure is not merely a burden but a transformative force that shapes ordinary individuals into extraordinary personalities. Just as a diamond shines because it has endured intense pressure over time, a person shines in society because they have faced trials with courage and learned valuable lessons from them. Therefore, rather than fearing pressure, one should embrace it as a necessary step towards growth, excellence and self-realisation.

The saying, 'No pressure, No diamonds' is clearly reflected in the way economic hardships shape human creativity and innovation. When people face financial difficulties, limited resources, or unemployment, they are often forced to think differently and search for new ways to survive and succeed. Economic pressure pushes individuals use their skills, imagination, and determination to create opportunities where none seem to exist. Many small businesses, inventions and successful enterprises have been born out of such challenging circumstances. For instance, innovators and entrepreneurs like Dhirubhai Ambani began life with very modest means but turned his struggles into motivation to build great enterprises. Similarly, creative thinkers like Steve Jobs transformed limitations into revolutionary ideas that changed industries. Economic hardships teach people the value of resourcefulness, hardwork and persistence. They encourage individuals to think beyond traditional methods, explore new solutions and innovate in ways that benefit not only themselves but also society.

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Without such pressures, many people might remain within their comfort zones and never discover their hidden potential. Thus, economic challenges, though difficult, often act as powerful, forces that stimulate creativity, inspire innovation, and transform ordinary struggles into extraordinary achievements proving that just as diamonds are formed under intense pressure, remarkable ideas and achievements are often born from economic adversity.

The idea, No pressure, No diamonds can be clearly understood through the role of social struggles in bringing reforms and improvements in society. Throughout history, many important changes have occurred because people faced injustice, discrimination and inequality and then raised their voices against them. When societies experience social pressure in the form of unfair laws, oppression, or denial of rights, individuals and communities begin to question these conditions and work collectively for change. Such struggles often awaken public awareness and inspire reform movements that aim to create a more just and equal society. For example, leaders like Mahatma Gandhi fought against, colonial rule through peaceful resistance, which eventually contributed to India s independence. Similarly, Martin Luther King Jr. led movements against racial discrimination in the United States, bringing important civil right reforms. In India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, worked tirelessly to eliminate social discrimination and secure equal rights through constitutional reforms. These examples show that social struggles, though painful and challenging, often become powerful forces that push societies towards progress. They encourage people to rethink outdated practices, promote justice and establish fairer systems for future generations. Therefore, just as immense pressure transforms ordinary carbon into a brilliant diamond, social struggles often transform societies by leading to meaningful reforms and lasting improvements.

In conclusion, the saying, No pressure, No diamonds reminds us that challenges and difficulties are not merely obstacles but powerful forces that shape our growth and character. Just as a diamond is formed after enduring immense heat and pressure deep within the Earth, human beings also develop strength, wisdom and resilience through struggles in life. Whether it is social challenges, economic hardships, or personal failures, these pressures often push individuals to work harder, think creatively and discover their hidden potential. History and society repeatedly show that progress and success rarely come from comfort and ease; they are usually the result of determination in the face of adversity. When people learn to face pressure with courage, patience and a positive attitude, they transform hardships into opportunities for growth and achievement. Therefore, instead of fearing difficulties, we should embrace them as a valuable experience that polish our abilities and character ultimately turning ordinary individuals into extraordinary personalities just as pressure transforms simple carbon into a sparkling diamond.

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Ms. Ritika Pratiyogita Darpan is very renowned magazine, which is immensely helpful for competitive exams., especially for civil services preparation. Many aspirants, I have found, praising it for meaningful content.

PD What is the secret of your success ?

Ms. Ritika My own faith and that of my family that I will achieve the success in examination was the secret of my success.

PD To whom would you like to give the credit for your success ?

Ms. Ritika I give the credit of my success to my parents and my three siblings.

PD Any suggestion/advice you would like to give to the future aspirants.

Ms. Ritika If you have clarity, you will win in life.

PD Thank you very much and wishing you all the best for your future endeavours.

P.Darpan

ESSAY COMPETITION

Topic : **Who Cares for Nowhere Children**

Last Date : May 25, 2026

Cash Prizes : 1st : ₹ 1,500/- ; **2nd :** ₹ 1,200/- ; **3rd :** ₹ 1,000/-

DEBATE COMPETITION

Topic : **Casteism in India has Evolved into a Modern Political and Economic Tool within the Democratic Set up**

Last Date : May 25, 2026

Cash Prizes : ₹ 1,500/- (Each in favour/against)

Rules and Regulations :

- Duly signed hand written entries on Essay/Debate in maximum limit of 1500 words with relevant details must be sent by e-mails or by ordinary post.
- Only one entry on Essay/Debate will be accepted from one participant.
- Entries must be submitted with declaration mentioning **This is my original work and is unpublished elsewhere** and should have complete name, address, mobile no., passport size photograph alongwith bank account details/IFSC code.
- Prize money will be awarded through cheques alongwith certificates from Pratiyogita Darpan. The awarded entries will be published in the forthcoming issue of Pratiyogita Darpan.

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Debate Contest

World is Moving Towards Deglobalisation

In Favour

—Diksha Sinha

"The era of hyper-globalisation is over."

—Christine Lagarde

Globalisation, once celebrated as the defining force of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, promised a borderless world driven by free trade, technological integration and cultural exchange. Institutions like the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund symbolised the spirit of interconnected economies. However, recent global developments indicate a visible shift in direction. Trade wars, geopolitical tensions, pandemic disruptions, protectionist policies and regional alliances suggest that the world is gradually moving towards deglobalisation.



Diksha Sinha

Deglobalisation does not imply complete isolation but refers to the slowing down or reversal of global economic integration. Nations are increasingly prioritising self-reliance, strategic autonomy and domestic production over excessive dependence on global supply chains.

The Rise of Protectionism

One of the strongest indicators of deglobalisation is the resurgence of protectionism. The trade war between the United States and China marked a significant turning point in global economic relations. Tariff hikes, restrictions on technology transfer and supply chain restructuring disrupted decades of economic interdependence.

The 'America First' policy under Donald Trump emphasised domestic manufacturing and reduced reliance on foreign imports. Similarly, several European nations have adopted policies promoting local industries and tightening immigration norms. These trends reflect growing scepticism towards unrestricted globalisation.

Protectionism has gained political support because many citizens believe that globalisation has widened income inequalities and led to job losses in manufacturing sectors. As economist Dani Rodrik argues, excessive globalisation can undermine domestic social contracts.

Furthermore, COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that overdependence on a few global hubs can be risky. Consequently, countries are diversifying or localising supply chains, signalling a shift away from hyperglobalisation.

Geopolitical Conflicts and Economic Fragmentation

Geopolitical tensions have further accelerated deglobalisation. The Russia-Ukraine conflict disrupted global energy and food markets. Western sanctions against Russia reshaped trade patterns and financial transactions. Russia, in turn, sought closer economic cooperation with non-Western partners.

Similarly, increasing tensions in the South China Sea and concerns over Taiwan have heightened strategic rivalry between major powers. Nations are forming new economic blocs and alliances based on political alignment rather than purely economic efficiency.

The formation of regional trade agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the strengthening of blocs like the European Union indicate a move towards regionalisation rather than global integration. This fragmentation suggests that economic cooperation is increasingly confined within trusted networks.

Technological Nationalism

Countries are restricting the export of advanced technologies such as semiconductors and artificial intelligence tools. The United States has imposed export controls on high-end chips to China, while China is investing heavily in indigenous innovation.

The concept of 'digital sovereignty' is gaining prominence. Governments seek control over data, digital infrastructure and cybersecurity frameworks within national boundaries. The fragmentation of the internet into different regulatory zones, sometimes called the 'splinternet', reflects technological deglobalisation.

Economic Nationalism and Self-Reliance

The idea of economic nationalism is re-emerging globally. Countries are incentivizing domestic manufacturing through subsidies, tax benefits and production-linked incentives. The focus has shifted from cost efficiency to resilience and strategic autonomy.

For example, the United States passed the CHIPS and Science Act to promote domestic semiconductor production. Similarly, the European Union is pursuing industrial policies to reduce dependence on external suppliers in critical sectors like energy and defence.

Social and Cultural Backlash

Globalisation has not only economic but also cultural implications. Rapid migration and cultural exchange have sometimes triggered identity anxieties and nationalist sentiments. Political movements advocating stricter immigration policies have gained traction in several countries.

Brexit, the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, stands as a prominent example of public resistance to supranational integration.

Such developments indicate that sections of society perceive globalisation as a threat to local identity and autonomy, further strengthening deglobalisation trends.

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Financial Fragmentation

The global financial system, long dominated by Western institutions, is witnessing gradual diversification. Discussions around conducting trade in local currencies and reducing dependence on the US dollar highlight the desire for financial autonomy.

Institutions like BRICS are expanding cooperation in trade and finance among developing nations. Such initiatives signal a move towards multipolar economic arrangements rather than a single integrated global system.

Indian Perspective : Strategic Autonomy and Selective Integration

India's approach provides a balanced yet clear example of the global shift towards calibrated deglobalisation. In recent years, India has emphasised the principle of 'strategic autonomy' in economic and foreign policy decisions.

Withdrawal from RCEP, launching PLI and Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, selective engagement through BRICS, G20 and QUAD demonstrates that deglobalisation does not imply isolation, but rather cautious and interest-based integration.

Furthermore, India's emphasis on digital sovereignty through data localisation debates and promotion of indigenous digital platforms reflects technological nationalism similar to global trends.

Conclusion

The world today stands at a crossroads. The optimism of the post-Cold War global order has given way to strategic rivalry, protectionism and economic nationalism. Nations are prioritizing resilience over efficiency, sovereignty over interdependence and security over openness.

Thus, it can be convincingly argued that the world is indeed moving towards deglobalisation—not through complete isolation, but through strategic recalibration of global engagement. The future may not be a fully global village, but rather a network of interconnected yet cautious nations, balancing cooperation with autonomy.

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As Joseph Stiglitz aptly observed, *"Globalisation has not worked for many of the world's poor."* The present shift towards deglobalisation reflects an attempt to correct imbalances and redefine global integration on more equitable and secure terms.

In Against

—Sandip J. Sharma

Globalisation is not a fragile trend that can be reversed by a few policy shifts. It is a structural evolution of human civilization, driven by technology, economics, communication and the innate human desire to connect. What we are witnessing today is not deglobalisation, but recalibration. Let us examine the evidence :



Sandip J. Sharma

1. Economic Interdependence has Deepened, not Diminished : If the world were truly deglobalising, we would expect to see a sustained collapse in international trade and cross-border investment. Yet global trade volumes, after temporary disruptions during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have rebounded strongly. Supply chains have not disappeared; they have diversified. Companies are adopting 'China plus one' strategies—not abandoning global networks, but broadening them.

Reshoring and nearshoring are often cited as proof of deglobalisation. But relocating a factory from one country to another does not end globalization—it redistributes it. When manufacturing shifts from one region to Southeast Asia, Latin America, or Eastern Europe, global integration continues; it simply evolves.

Moreover, multinational corporations continue to operate across dozens of countries. Capital flows through global financial markets at speeds unimaginable decades ago. Investment portfolios are international. Stock exchanges react instantly to events occurring thousands of miles away.

2. Digital Globalisation is Accelerating Rapidly : Perhaps the strongest evidence against deglobalisation lies in the digital realm. Even if physical goods faced barriers, data knows no borders.

Cross-border data flows have grown exponentially in the past decade, outpacing traditional trade growth. E-commerce allows small businesses to reach international customers without ever opening a foreign branch. Digital payments, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies operate on inherently global infrastructures.

Deglobalisation would require digital isolation—yet no major economy has fully retreated from the global internet ecosystem. Even where digital sovereignty policies exist, complete disconnection is economically and technologically impractical.

In fact, we are witnessing the rise of a new phase : hyperconnectivity. The global village is not shrinking—it is expanding into the virtual realm.

3. Global Challenges Demand Global Cooperation : If the world were truly moving towards deglobalisation, international cooperation would be collapsing. But global challenges—climate change, pandemics, cybersecurity threats, financial stability—require coordinated responses.

The COVID-19 pandemic itself demonstrated the necessity of global scientific collaboration. Climate agreements, renewable energy partnerships, global health initiatives, and international disaster relief efforts continue to involve multiple nations working together. Even geopolitical rivals engage in negotiation frameworks when global risks threaten collective stability.

4. Cultural Globalisation is Irreversible : Beyond economics and politics lies culture. Music, film, fashion, cuisine and ideas travel instantly across borders.

Streaming platforms distribute content globally within seconds—Migration both temporary and permanent—continues to blend cultures. International tourism,

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though temporarily reduced during the pandemic, has rebounded strongly. Students pursue higher education abroad in large numbers. Diasporas maintain ties with their countries of origin through remittances, digital communication, and transnational communities.

Even political movements draw inspiration from events abroad. Activism, entrepreneurship and social change echo across continents. Culture has become transnational. To argue that the world is deglobalising is to ignore the daily lived experience of billions who consume, create and communicate across borders.

5. Supply Chain Resilience is not Deglobalisation : Our opponents may argue that trade tensions, tariffs and national security concerns signal a retreat from global integration. But strengthening supply chain resilience does not equal deglobalisation.

Diversification is a rational response to risk. When companies seek multiple suppliers in different countries, they are not retreating from global trade—they are expanding their international networks to reduce dependency.

6. Emerging Markets are Driving New Global Integration : Another overlooked factor is the rise of emerging economies. Countries in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America are increasingly participating in global value chains, digital commerce and financial markets.

Regional trade agreements are expanding. Cross-border infrastructure projects connect continents through railways, ports, fiber-optic cables, and energy grids. South-South trade is growing rapidly, reducing reliance on traditional Western markets and creating new networks of exchange.

Globalisation is no longer a one-directional process dominated by a few powers. It is multipolar and more inclusive. This shift may appear as fragmentation to some observers, but it is in fact broader participation in the global system. The center of gravity is shifting—not collapsing.

7. The Cost of Deglobalisation is too High : Let us consider the practical implications of true deglobalisation.

To disengage from global trade would mean higher consumer prices, reduced innovation, slower economic growth and limited access to essential goods. Countries dependent on exports would suffer massive unemployment. Nations reliant on imports for food, medicine, or energy would face shortages.

Modern technology—smartphones, vehicles, medical equipment—relies on components sourced from dozens of countries. Attempting to localize every stage of production would multiply costs and reduce efficiency.

Businesses, consumers and governments understand these realities. While rhetoric may favour protectionism at times, economic self-interest ultimately favours integration.

History shows that prolonged economic isolation often leads to stagnation. Interdependence, though complex, has historically driven prosperity.

8. Globalisation has Always Faced Cycles : It is important to recognize that globalisation is not linear. It has experienced setbacks before—during world wars, financial crises and political upheavals. Yet each time, integration eventually resumed, often stronger and more sophisticated than before.

The late 19th century saw remarkable global trade expansion, followed by protectionist policies in the early 20th century. After World War II, global institutions and trade systems were rebuilt and expanded.

Today's challenges—pandemics, geopolitical rivalries, economic nationalism—may represent turbulence, not reversal.

Globalisation is resilient because it is rooted in fundamental human and economic incentives : efficiency, innovation, connection and opportunity.

9. Technology Makes Reversal Nearly Impossible : Unlike earlier eras, today's globalisation is deeply embedded in technology. Decoupling entirely would require dismantling global technological infrastructures—an unrealistic and economically destructive endeavour.

Even nations seeking greater autonomy in certain sectors remain connected through trade, communication and finance. The web of interdependence is too dense to unravel completely.

Conclusion : Transformation, not Retreat

The claim that the world is moving towards deglobalisation misinterprets adaptation as abandonment.

Globalisation today is more digital, more multipolar, and more complex than the version we saw in the 1990s. It is not disappearing—it is evolving.

The smartphone in your pocket likely contains components from multiple continents. The news you read may be written abroad. The entertainment you watch, the apps you use, the food you eat and the ideas you encounter daily are products of global exchange.

Deglobalisation would mean isolation. Yet our daily lives reflect integration. The world is not retreating behind walls. It is weaving a denser web—one that may shift, stretch, and occasionally strain, but ultimately holds firm. The world is not moving towards deglobalisation. It is moving towards a new phase of globalisation—smarter, more resilient and more interconnected than ever before.

P.Darpan

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Concentric Quiz

Special on World Geography

1. Which of the following is not a glacio-fluvial landform ?
   (A) Drumlin
   (B) Esker
   (C) Kame
   (D) Kettle Hole

2. Which of the following represents the correct sequence of increasing metamorphic grade ?
   (A) Phyllite → Slate → Schist → Gneiss
   (B) Slate → Schist → Phyllite → Gneiss
   (C) Slate → Phyllite → Schist → Gneiss
   (D) Slate → Phyllite → Gneiss → Schist

3. Identify the incorrect statement :
   (A) The P–wave velocity increases smoothly with depth from 8·1 km/s at the outer rim to 10·3 km/s above the inner core boundary
   (B) The P–wave velocity in the inner core is about 11·3 km/s
   (C) The outer core does not transmit S–waves
   (D) There is a complete shadow for P–waves in the core

4. Which of the following is not a Hercynian Mountain ?
   (A) Black Forest
   (B) Harz Mountains
   (C) Ardennes
   (D) Pyrenees

5. Consider the following statements :
   I. Baguio is a local term for a tropical cyclone in Tasmania.
   II. It rotates in clockwise direction.
   III. Hurricanes in the Southern Hemisphere rotates in the clockwise direction.
   How many of the above statements are correct ?
   (A) Only one
   (B) Only two
   (C) All three
   (D) None of the above

6. How many of the following pairs are incorrectly matched ?
   I. Absolute Humidity : Changes with change in temperature.
   II. Relative Humidity : Change in temperature does not affect it.
   III. Specific Humidity : Leads to condensation when it reaches 100% for a particular temperature.
   IV. Dew Point : Temperature at which air is completely saturated.
   Choose the correct option :
   (A) Only one
   (B) Only two
   (C) Only three
   (D) All four

7. Which of the following is incorrect about the Kelp Forests ?
   (A) They are under-water ecosystem found majorly in tropical areas
   (B) Kelps are large brown algae found in shallow waters
   (C) Kelp forests are found along 25% to 30% of the world's coastlines
   (D) They act as Blue Carbon sink

8. Choose the incorrect pair :
   (A) Walvis Ridge : Extends from New Zealand to Californian coast
   (B) Carlsberg Ridge : Runs from Rodrigues Triple Point to the Gulf of Aden
   (C) Wyville Thomson Ridge : Separates Faroe-Shetland Channel from the Rockall Trough
   (D) Telegraph Plateau : Extends between Newfoundland and Ireland

9. The North American Plains are famous for :
   (A) Intensive Subsistence Farming
   (B) Commercial Dairy Farming
   (C) Commercial Grain Farming
   (D) Horticulture

10. Which of the following is correct about the Whittlesey's classification of the World Agricultural Regions ?
   (A) The classification of the world agricultural regions is based on five characteristics
   (B) 13 main types of agricultural regions have been identified
   (C) Intensive subsistence tillage with paddy dominance is mainly practiced in South and South-East Asia
   (D) All of the above

11. Which of the following Great Lakes is not located on the USA-Canada international boundary ?
   (A) Lake Michigan
   (B) Lake Erie
   (C) Lake Huron
   (D) Lake Ontario

12. Who among the following coined the term 'Silk Road' in 1877 ?
   (A) Dickinson (B) Ritter
   (C) Humboldt (D) Richthofen

13. Consider the following statements :
   I. Cartogram maps : Emphasize statistical data over geographical accuracy.
   II. Choropleth maps : Use of sequential colour scheme.
   III. Isopleth : Contour lines that connect points of equal value on a map or chart.
   IV. Animated Maps : Used to depict growth in city as its population and area changes with time.
   How many of the above statements are correct ?
   (A) Only one (B) Only two
   (C) Only three (D) All four

14. Identify the correct pair :
   (A) Auden's Col : Connects Gangotri and Kedarnath Valleys
   (B) Mana Pass : Connects Ladakh with Tibet

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(C) Lipulekh Pass : Located at tri-junction of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh

(D) Muling La : Located in Chamoli District of Uttarakhand

15. Which of the following statements is not correct about Glacial Lake Outburst floods (GLOF) ?

(A) Overdeeping of former glacial beds are uncovered during the course of glacial retreat which allows melt water to collect as glacial lakes

(B) About 15 million people globally are exposed to impact for potential GLOF

(C) Population of High Mountains of Asia (HMA) are the most exposed to GLOF in the world

(D) GLOF mitigation is covered under UN : SDG-12

16. Which of the following is not correct about the Urban Heat Island effect ?

I. An urban heat island occurs when a city experiences much warmer temperatures than nearby rural areas.

II. The difference in temperature between urban and less-developed rural areas has to do with how well the surfaces in each environment absorb and hold heat.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I

(B) Only II

(C) Both I and II

(D) Neither I nor II

17. Arrange the following islands of the Indian Ocean from south to north :

I. Comoros

II. Seychelles

III. Agalega

IV. Reunion

Choose the correct option :

(A) IV-III-II-I

(B) IV-III-I-II

(C) III-IV-I-II

(D) III-II-IV-I

18. Consider the following statements :

I. Katabatic winds originate in cold upland areas and cascade toward low elevations under the influence of gravity and are also referred as gravity flow winds.

II. Pampero and Haboob are the local Katabatic winds.

Which of the above statements are correct ?

(A) Only I

(B) Only II

(C) Both I and II

(D) Neither I nor II

19. Identify the correct statements :

I. The fastest and deepest geostrophic currents are found at the western boundaries of ocean basins.

II. Western boundary currents are more concentrated and eastern boundary currents are more diffusive.

III. Brazil current is the largest of the western boundary currents.

IV. Canary, Benguela and Humboldt currents are eastern boundary currents.

Choose the correct option :

(A) Only I, II and IV

(B) Only I, II and III

(C) Only I, III and IV

(D) Only III and IV

20. Consider the following statements :

I. The concept of 'Edge Cities' was popularized by Joel Garreau in 1991.

II. Edge cities are large, master-planned concentrations of business, shopping and entertainment located on the suburban outskirts of major metropolitan areas.

III. Canary Wharf (London) is an example of Edge City.

Which of the above statements are correct ?

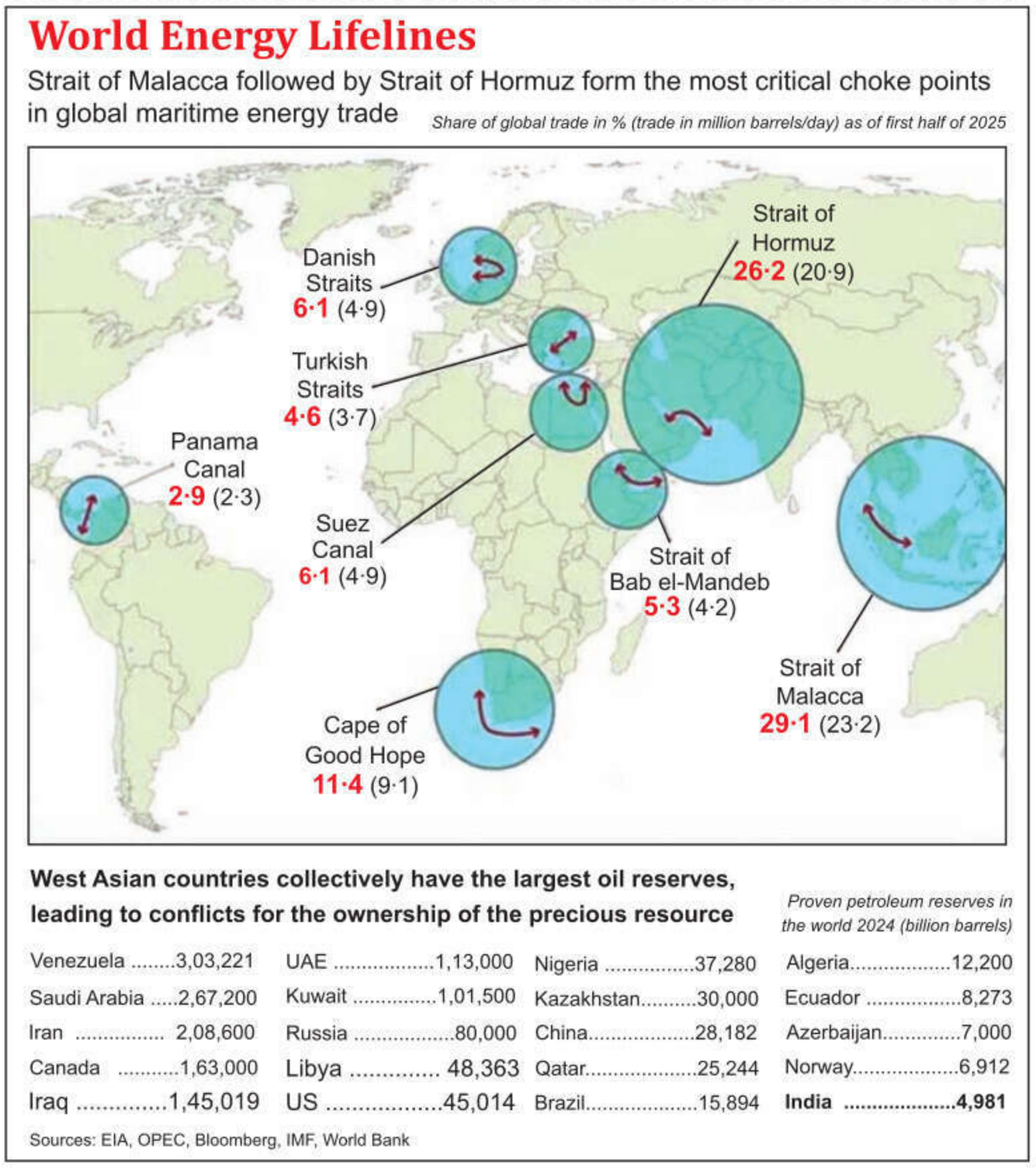
(A) Only I and II

(B) Only II and III

(C) All I, II and III

(D) Only II

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Concentric Quiz

ENTRY FORM

Special on World Geography

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1.	☐	☐	☐	☐	6.	☐	☐	☐	☐	11.	☐	☐	☐	☐	16.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	☐	☐	7.	☐	☐	☐	☐	12.	☐	☐	☐	☐	17.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	8.	☐	☐	☐	☐	13.	☐	☐	☐	☐	18.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	☐	☐	☐	☐	9.	☐	☐	☐	☐	14.	☐	☐	☐	☐	19.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	☐	☐	☐	☐	10.	☐	☐	☐	☐	15.	☐	☐	☐	☐	20.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Rules and Regulations

- All students or those appearing in competitive examinations can take part in this contest.
- Candidates taking part in quiz contest will necessarily have to send their entries by the fixed date. Entries are to be sent by ordinary post. Please mark your envelope **'Quiz–Pratiyogita Darpan'** on the top left hand side.
- Answers given only on the Entry Form of the magazine will be admissible.
- In the form there are four squares against each question number. Contestants should put a Tick (✓) in the square for the answer they think is correct. Giving more than one answer to a question will disqualify it.
- Contestants should essentially write the number of questions they have solved.
- Marks will be deducted for wrong answers.
- The candidate sending the maximum number of correct answers will be given ₹ 1000 as first prize. Next two candidates after that will get ₹ 800 and ₹ 600 as second and third prize respectively. If there are more than one candidate eligible for a prize, the amount will be equally distributed among them.
- Write your name in English in Capital Letters. The name must be the one which appears in your bank account. Also, write the bank account number, IFSC code of the bank and your mobile phone number.
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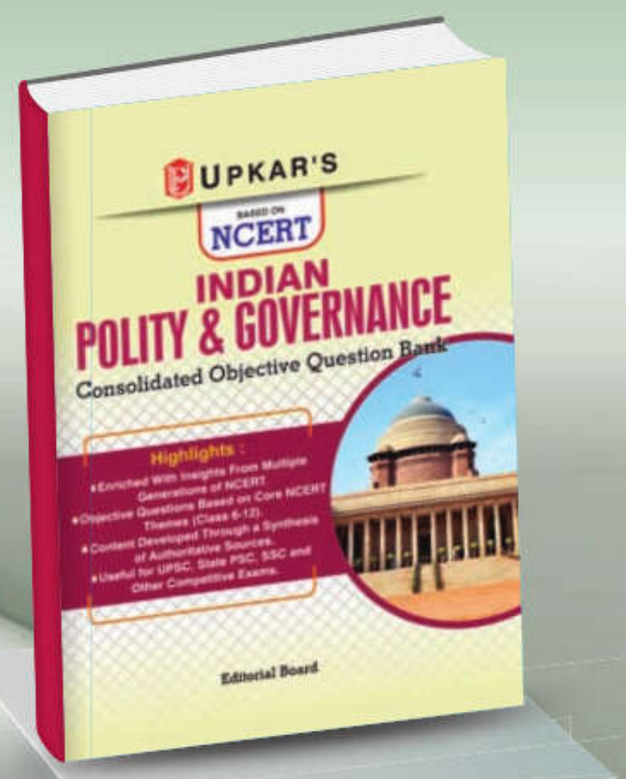
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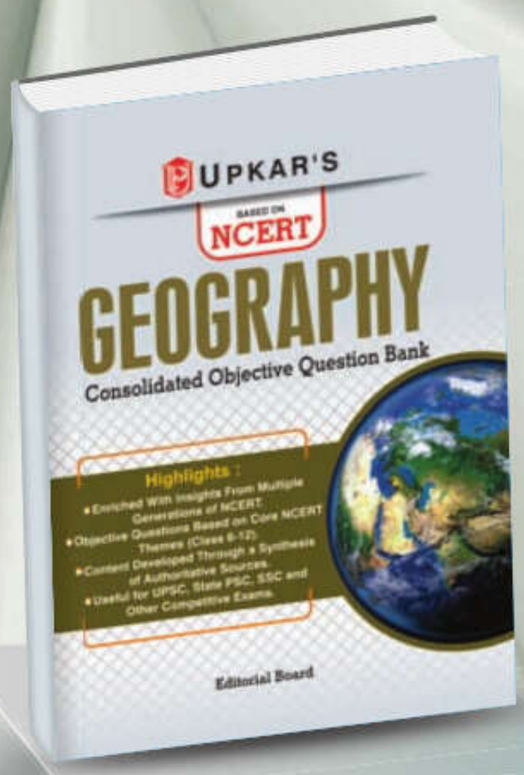
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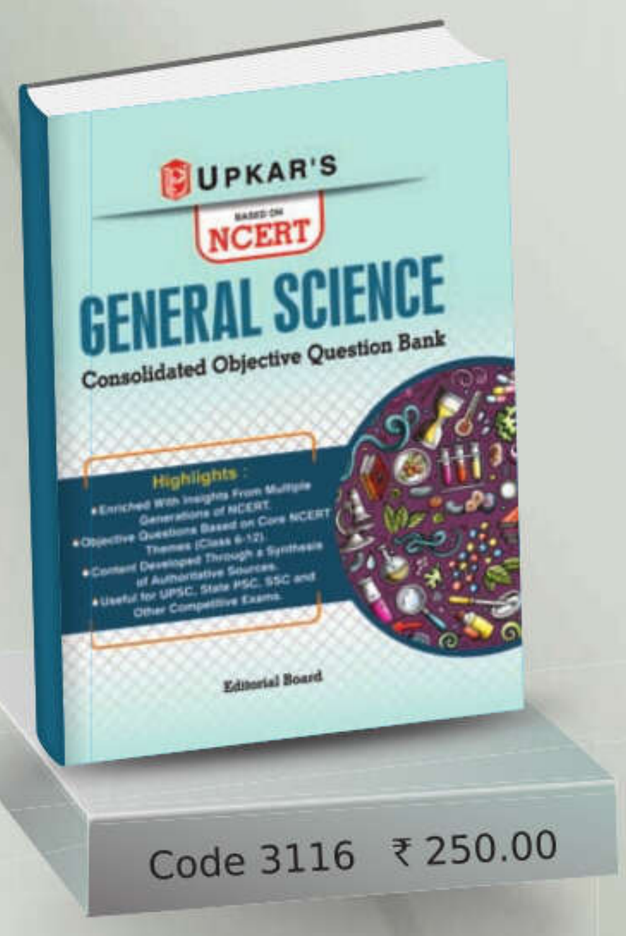
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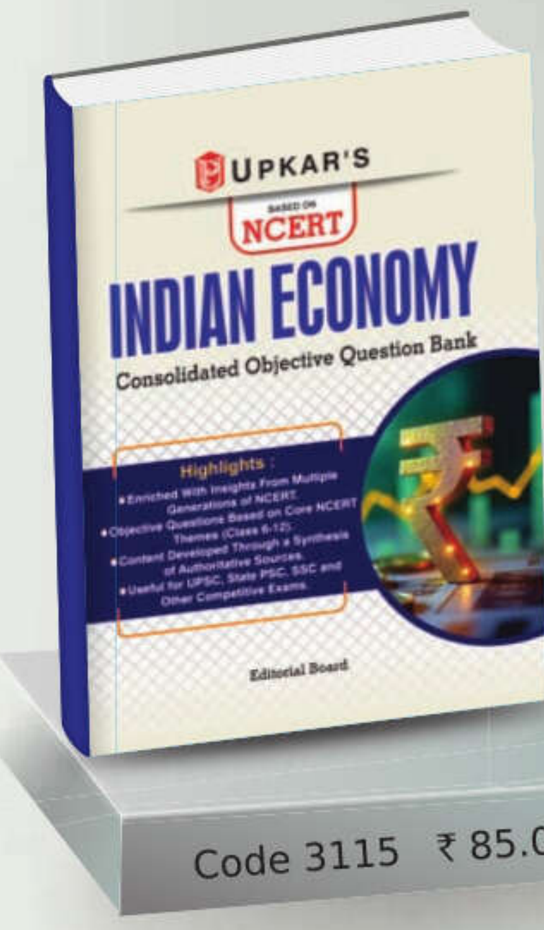
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Mahesh Kumar
The English Villa,
Gurunanak Pura, Narnaul
Haryana–123 001

Second Prize Winner



Diksha Sinha
D/o Uday Kumar
Koderma
Jharkhand–825 409

Third Prize Winner



Shreyali Mishra
Varanasi
Uttar Pradesh

Debate Competition

Topic : World is Moving Towards Deglobalisation

Winners

In Favour



Diksha Sinha
D/o Uday Kumar
Koderma
Jharkhand–825 409

Against the Topic



Sandip J. Sharma
E-303, Nallasopara (East),
Palghar
Maharashtra–401 209

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(Special on Modern Indian History (1857-1947)

First Prize Winner

Ajay Kumar
406, Dream Homes Residency,
R.K. Puram, Danapur,
Patna, Bihar–801 503

Second Prize Winner

Nitish Parashar
B4/501, Cherry County,
Greater Noida West
Uttar Pradesh–201 306

Third Prize Winner

S. Arockiya Beljin Raj
16, Vidya Colony and Street,
K.K. Nagar, Madurai,
Tamil Nadu–625 020

Answers

1. (D)	2. (D)	3. (D)	4. (D)	5. (C)
6. (D)	7. (C)	8. (B)	9. (D)	10. (D)
11. (B)	12. (A)	13. (D)	14. (D)	15. (D)
16. (D)	17. (C)	18. (A)	19. (A)	20. (D)

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Mental Exercise

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



1. Which of the following statements is incorrect about the Strait of Hormuz ?
   (A) It is a narrow international waterway between Iran and Oman
   (B) Qatar, one of the world's largest LNG exporters, exports almost all of its LNG through strait of Hormuz
   (C) Strait of Hormuz is the world's busiest shipping choke-point
   (D) Saudi Arabia and UAE have pipelines that can bypass the Strait of Hormuz

2. Consider the following pairs in relation to Shiite militias and their area of operations :
   I. Hezbollah—Lebanon
   II. Kataib Hezbollah and Badr Brigade—Iraq
   III. Houthis—Yemen
   IV. Saraya Awliya al-Dam—Jordan
   Which of the above pairs are matched correctly ?
   (A) Only I, II and III
   (B) Only II, III and IV
   (C) Only I, III and IV
   (D) All I, II, III and IV

3. Consider the following pairs in relation to war code names given for various US invasions :
   I. Enduring Freedom—US invasion of Afghanistan
   II. Epic Fury—US attack on Iran
   III. Midnight Hammer—US attack on Iraq
   How many of the above pairs are matched correctly ?
   (A) Only one
   (B) Only two
   (C) All three
   (D) None of the above

4. Which of the following Lok Sabha Speakers had faced no-confidence motions, which were negativated ?
   I. G. V. Mavlankar
   II. Hukum Singh
   III. Balram Jakhar
   IV. Om Birla
   Correct code is :
   (A) Only I and IV
   (B) Only II and IV
   (C) Only III and IV
   (D) All I, II, III and IV

5. Who among the following is the longest serving Chief Minister in Indian States ?
   (A) Naveen Patnaik (Odisha)
   (B) Jyoti Basu (West Bengal)
   (C) Gegong Apang (Arunachal Pradesh)
   (D) Lal Thanhawla (Mizoram)

6. 'Paris Principles' are related to :
   (A) Climate Change
   (B) Human Rights
   (C) Educational Development
   (D) Food Security

7. Which of the following statements is incorrect in relation to the procedure of removal of Chief Election Commissioner of India from the office ?
   (A) The CEC shall not be removed from his office except in the like manner and on the like grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court
   (B) The motion for the impeachment can only be moved in the Lok Sabha
   (C) Constitution of three member committee to investigate the charges
   (D) To pass the motion of impeachment, it requires a majority of the total membership of House and a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting

8. The Reverse osmosis technology is used in :
   I. Desalination of brackish water
   II. Radioactive waste treatment
   III. Water reuse (Pharma/bio)
   Which of the above are correct ?
   (A) Only III
   (B) Only I and II
   (C) Only I and III
   (D) All I, II and III

9. The main constituents of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) are :
   I. Butane II. Ethane
   III. Methane IV. Propane
   Correct code is :
   (A) Only I and IV
   (B) Only I and II
   (C) Only II and III
   (D) Only I and III

10. 'Helioseismology' is :
    (A) A method used in the estimation of distance between the Earth and the Sun
    (B) A method used to detect the movements inside the Sun
    (C) The study of the magnetic field surrounding the Sun
    (D) The observation of the Sun's outer atmosphere and solar winds

11. Consider the following pairs :
    I. Global Positioning System Jamming—The use of a device called a jammer to overpower weaker signals with 'noise' on the same frequency.
    II. Global Positioning System Spoofing—Providing false information to the pilot of the aircraft about their location.
    Which of the above pairs are matched correctly ?
    (A) Only I
    (B) Only II
    (C) Both I and II
    (D) Neither I nor II

12. Consider the following States :
    I. Uttarakhand
    II. Uttar Pradesh
    III. Gujarat
    IV. Bihar
    V. Karnataka
    VI. Odisha
    Which of the above States has / have enacted laws regulating religious conversion ?

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(A) Only I, II, III, V
(B) Only I and II
(C) Only I, II, III and IV
(D) Only I, II, VI

13. Which of the following was one of the youngest members and the only Dalit woman in the Constituent Assembly ?
(A) Dakshayani Velayudhan
(B) Muthulakshmi Reddy
(C) Rukmini Lakshmipathi
(D) Sathyavani Muthu

14. First day of Hindu New Year (Vikram Samvat) falls on the Pratipada of Shukla Paksha of Chaitra month. The same day is known and celebrated by different names across the country.
Which of the following pairs is/are matched correctly in this regard ?
I. Gudi Padwa—Marathi and Konkani new year
II. Ugadi (Yugadi)—Telugu and Kannada new year
III. Chetichand—New year of Sindhi Hindus
IV. Navreh—New year of Kashmiri Hindus
V. Sajibu Nongma Panba—New year festival of Meitei people of Manipur
Correct code is :
(A) Only I, II, III, V
(B) Only I, III, IV, V
(C) Only II, III, V, IV
(D) All I, II, III, IV and V

15. Match the List-I (Museum) and List-II (Location) and choose the correct code given below :

List-I

(a) Salar Jung Museum
(b) Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya
(c) Victoria Memorial Hall
(d) Raman Science Centre & Planetarium

List-II

1. Bhopal 2. Nagpur
3. Hyderabad 4. Kolkata

Correct code is :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	3	4	1	2
(B)	1	3	2	4
(C)	3	1	4	2
(D)	3	1	2	4

16. Which of the following pairs is not matched correctly ?
(A) Ancient Palace of Shey —Gangtok (Sikkim)
(B) Jageshwari Caves —Mumbai
(C) Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Temple—Nuggehalli (Karnataka)
(D) Brihadiswara Temple —Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu)

17. Which of the following pairs is not matched correctly in relation to certain revolts against Britisher in India ?
(A) Pagalpanthi Rebellion —Karam Shah
(B) Wahabi Movement —Syed Ahmad
(C) Khasi Rebellion —Narsingh Dattasthrey Petkar
(D) Satara Rebellion —Pratap Singh

18. Consider the following pairs :
I. Atmiya Sabha —Ram Mohan Roy
II. Tattvabodhini Sabha —Devendra Nath Tagore
III. Sangat Sabha —Guru Ram Das
IV. Indian Reform Association —Keshab Chandra Sen
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only I, II and III
(C) Only II and IV
(D) All I, II, III, IV

19. Swami Vivekanand believed that Indian Nationalism can be based on :
I. Conciousness and pride in the ancient glory of Bharata.
II. Awakening of the country men.
III. Development of moral and physical strength.
IV. Unity based on common spiritual ideas.
How many of the above are correct ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

20. Who among the following was popularly known as 'Mataji Maharani Tapiswani' ?
(A) Pandita Ramabai
(B) Sister Subhalakshmi
(C) Gangabai
(D) Madhulakshmi Reddy

21. Consider the following pairs in relation to original names of famous social reformers of India :
I. Swami Vivekananda —Narendra Nath Datta
II. Swami Dayanand Saraswati —Mool Shankar Tiwari
III. Swami Shraddhanand —Mahatma Munshi Ram
IV. Swami Nirmalanda —Tulsi Ram
How many pairs given above are matched correctly ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

22. Shale gas resources have been found at which of the following Basins ?
I. Cambay Basin
II. Cauvery Basin
III. Krishna—Godavari Basin
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

23. Which of the following is a critical ecological junction between the Western and Eastern Ghats ?
(A) Nallamala Forest
(B) Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve
(C) Nagarhole National Park
(D) Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve

24. Which of the following leaves modification occur in the desert areas to inhibit water loss ?
I. Hard and waxy leaves
II. Tiny leaves
III. Thorns instead of leaves
Correct code is :
(A) Only I
(B) Only III
(C) All I, II and III
(D) None of the above

25. Which of the following lakes has become dry and turned into a desert ?
(A) Lake Faguibine
(B) Lake Oguta
(C) Lake Victoria
(D) Lake Volta

26. Consider the List-I (Emitter) and List-II (Emitted Products) and choose the correct code given below :

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List–I

(a) Decaying Plants and animals
(b) Volcanoes
(c) Ocean
(d) Forest Fire

List-II

1. Particulate Matter
2. Oxygen
3. Carbon Dioxide
4. Water Vapour

Correct code is :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	3	4	1	2
(B)	3	4	2	1
(C)	3	2	4	1
(D)	2	3	1	4

27. Territorial areas of which Union Territory is located at three different locations ?
(A) Jammu & Kashmir
(B) Puducherry
(C) Ladakh
(D) Lakshadweep

28. Which of the following can take part in the meetings of the Lok Sabha without being a member of it ?
(A) Comptroller and Auditor General of India
(B) Chief Election Commission of India
(C) Attorney General of India
(D) Solicitor General of India

29. Fundamental Duties were included in the Constitution of India on the recommendations of :
(A) Indraji Gupta Committee
(B) Swarn Singh Committee
(C) Sikri Committee
(D) Second Administrative Reforms Commission

30. Consider the List-I (Provisions of Indian Constitution) and List-II (Seminal Sources) and choose the correct code given below :

List-I

(a) Concurrent List and VIIth Schedule
(b) Fundamental Duties
(c) Directive Principles of State Policy
(d) Procedure Established by Law

List-II

1. Japan
2. Ireland
3. USSR
4. Australia

Correct code is :

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
(A)	1	2	3	4
(B)	2	4	3	1
(C)	1	3	4	2
(D)	4	3	2	1

31. Which of the following devices does not work on the multiple reflections of sound waves ?
(A) Hydrophone
(B) Megaphone
(C) Sound Board
(D) Stethoscope

32. When the pitch of note produced by a harmonium is lowered, then the wavelength of the note ?
(A) Decreases
(B) First decreases and then increases
(C) Increases
(D) Remains the same

33. Sound can be produced by vibrating :
I. Stretched strings
II. Air Columns
III. Stretched Membrances
IV. Plates
Correct code is :
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only III and IV
(C) Only I and IV
(D) All I, II, III and IV

34. An iron ball of 5·6 kg is falling freely from a height of x, After it has fallen a height of $\frac{x}{2}$, it will possess :
(A) Only Potential energy
(B) Only Kinetic energy
(C) Half Potential energy and half Kinetic energy
(D) Less Potential energy and more Kinetic energy

35. Which of the following is not a third class lever ?
(A) Nutcracker
(B) Human Forearms
(C) Fishing Rods
(D) Brooms

36. Which of the following pairs is/are matched correctly ?
I. Combination reaction—Formation of a single substance.
II. Decomposition reaction—A compound splits into two or more substances.
III. Displacement reaction—One element is replaced by another element.
How many of the above pairs is/are matched correctly ?
(A) Only one
(B) Only two
(C) All three
(D) None of the above

37. Consider the following statements in relation to the earthworms :
I. The degradation of organic waste through the consumption by the earthworms is called vermicomposting.
II. An earthworm is physically an aerator, crusher and mixer.
III. An earthworm is chemically a degrader.
IV. An earthworm is biologically a stimulator.
How many statements given above are correct ?
(A) Only one (B) Only two
(C) Only three (D) All four

38. Which of the following is not an indigenous breed of buffalo ?
(A) Murrah (B) Mehsana
(C) Sahiwal (D) Surti

39. Consider the following facts about the electron microscope :
I. Electromagnets are used in it.
II. A beam of electrons is used in it instead of light.
III. Internal vacuum is not required in it.
Which of the above facts is/are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only I and III
(C) Only II and III
(D) All I, II and III

40. Consider the facts about the Lignin :
I. Lignin is a complex polymer.
II. Lignin acts as a cement and hardens cell wall.
III. Lignin provides flexibility and great tensile and compressional strength.
How many of the above are correct ?
(A) Only I and II
(B) Only II and III
(C) Only I and III
(D) All I, II and III

[For Answer See Page 165]

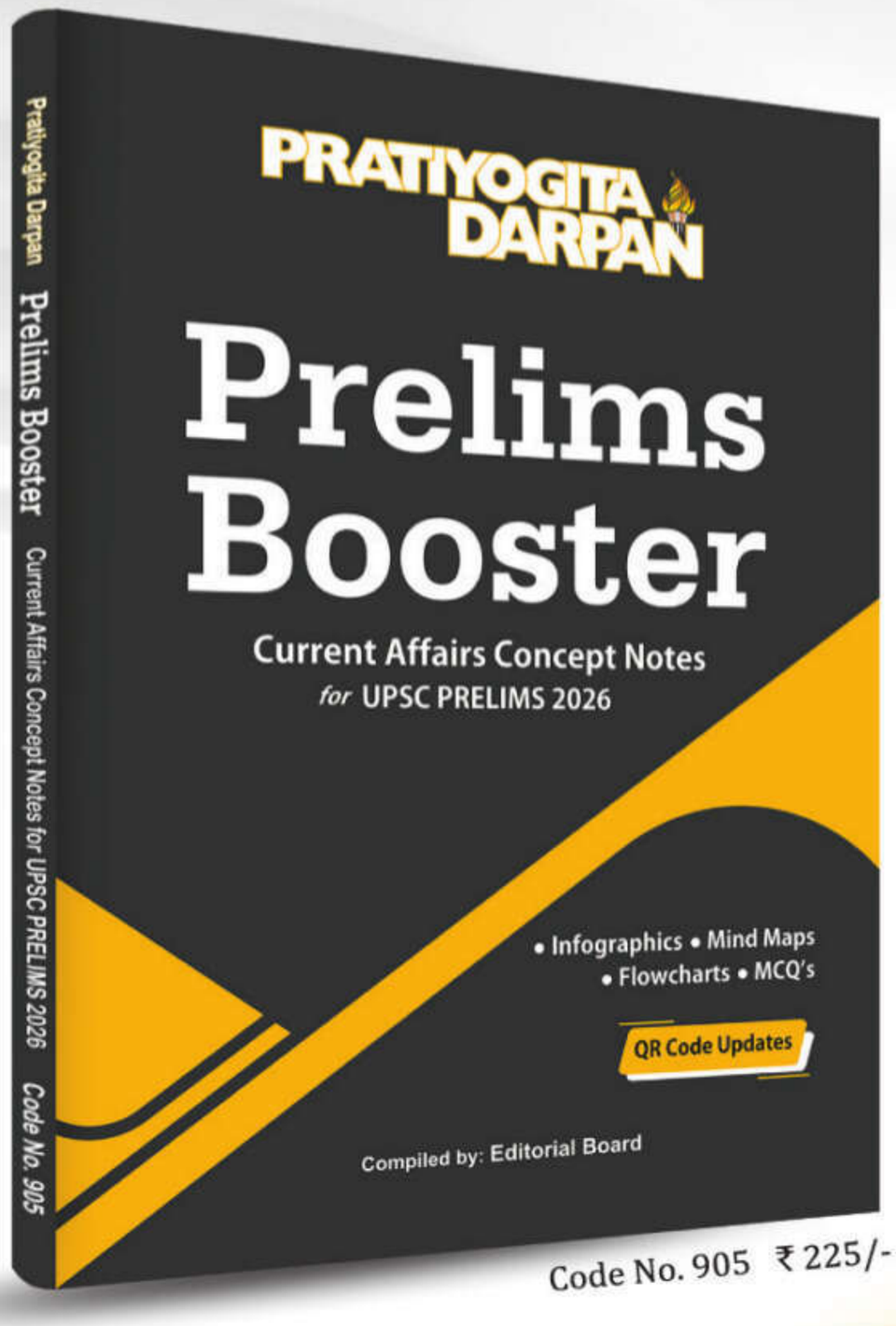
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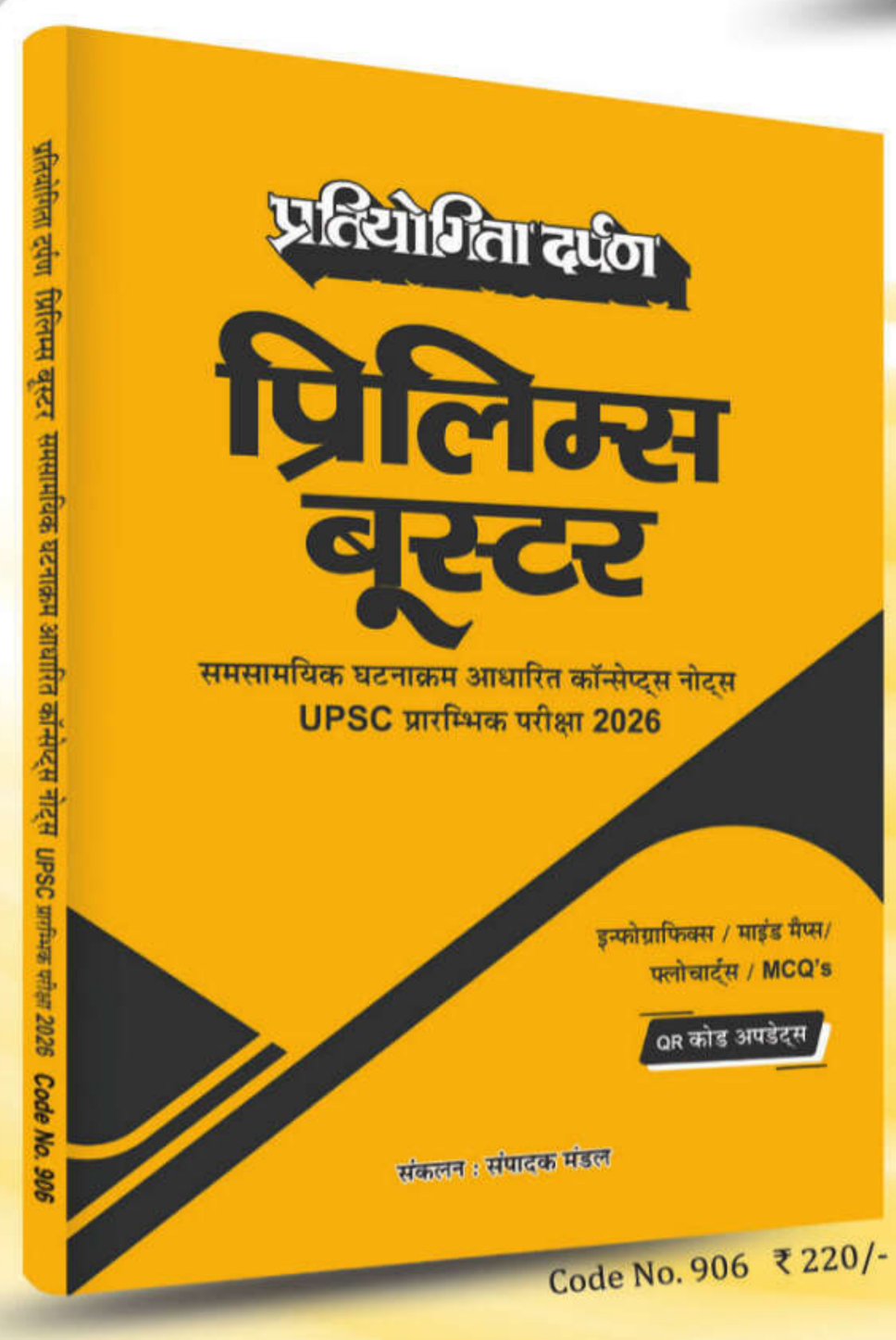
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