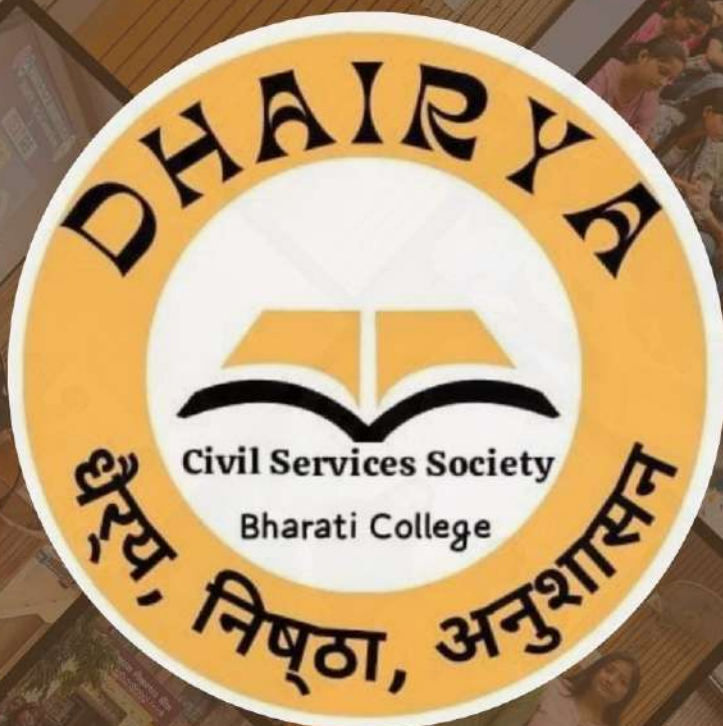




ISSUE 8, JULY

# DHAIRYA TIMES

*A quest for Horizon*



IPS Abhishek Vashistha  
UPSC, 2023

IPS Preeti Kumari  
UPSC-RANK 130, 2022

# DHAIRYA TIMES

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# INTRODUCTION

In a world that's constantly evolving, Dhairya Times, a monthly magazine series presented by Dhairya - The Civil Services Society, seeks to be your trusted guide to navigating the crucial trends, headlines, opinions, stories and ideas shaping our lives everyday.

Our missions stands to providing a platform for peer learning, holistic development and an analytical point of views that push our horizons beyond to build a crucial analysis of ongoing issues.

From in-depth features and peer analysis to all the technical information, we dive deep into the topics that are transforming the global landscape, while also forging in as your go-to resource for understanding the forces shaping the world we are a part of.

As a Society , we thrive to assist students in their academic and professional pursuits. To achieve this, we have come across monthly Current Affairs magazine series, starting from October.

We hope the standpoint of Dhairya and Dhairya Times as a whole brings about the desired change in boosting your understanding of facts along with opinions so stated.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As we reflect on the journey of completing Magazine - *Dhairya Times* for July 2025, we are reminded that every step was made possible by the unwavering support and expertise of our esteemed Principal Ma'am , Prof. Saloni Gupta, whose vision has shaped our society's mission.

Followed by the significant encouragement of our mentor, IRS Rajesh Gupta sir, for his invaluable insights and expertise, inspiring our students to strive for excellence. Our gratitude also extends to our guest speakers, IPS Preeti Kumari and IPS Abhishek Vashishtha, for sharing their experiences and motivating our students.

We thank our Convenor Mr. Vimlok Tiwari, our Associate Teacher's of Dhairya, and Dhairya's Editorial Board Members for their tireless efforts in making our monthly magazine a reality. The due contribution has enabled in shaping this endeavour in ways that words can scarcely capture, providing a valuable resource for Civil Services Aspirants

Sincerely  
Nikky Kaushik  
President

Dhairya: The Civil Services Society





*Prof. Saloni Gupta*

*Principal*

*Bharati College, University of Delhi*

**Hello my dear students.**

**I have always believed that your College is a place where three things are made viz. your career, your personality and your friends for life. Each one of these is very important and each one of you must explore all the avenues and opportunities available, towards each one of these payoffs from the college life.**

**Societies and clubs are platforms that often provide you with the wonderful confluence, if not congruence, of all three of these goals. They connect you to people with similar interests, they create opportunities for you to work in teams, they put you in positions of responsibility and leadership, they help you evolve as individuals and shape your personalities and, in their own intangible ways, they pave career paths for you by doing some or all of the above.**

**The Dhairya Society of our college is one such society that brings civil services aspirants of our college together and works towards supporting their goal of cracking this hallowed exam, conducted by the prestigious UPSC. Its a matter of great pride and satisfaction that the Dhairya society is bringing the first ever edition of its monthly magazine, aimed at sharing the vital information, tips and strategic advice for fellow aspirants.**

**I congratulate the office bearers and foot soldiers of this society and extend my best wishes to all our civil services aspirants.**

**Best wishes and best of luck.**

## *IRS Rajesh Gupta*



Greetings to the students of Bharati College in general and to the civil services aspirants connected via the platform of the Dhairya Society (Bharati College) in particular. It gives me immense pleasure to note that Dhairya society is doing commendable work in the field of peer learning, information dissemination and mutual self-help. Dhairya Times, its monthly magazine, is another step in that direction. I am glad to convey my congratulations and best wishes to all those who relate to the Dhairya Society and its meaningful endeavours.

I take this opportunity to give my perspective on the Role of Civil Servants, as a kind of a pep-talk to all you aspirants. As I see it, you as civil servants can help in bringing The Change that the society needs and probably the change that you also wish to see in your country, in the governance around you. This is a great platform that allows you to **B** the change you want to **C**. It is also an opportunity and a platform to serve the underprivileged masses and under-served sections. So, **Being the Voice of the Voiceless** is another role that can and should inspire the youth in our colleges towards this exam/job. This job also allows you to become **Self-made and Empowered**. **ANYONE CAN BECOME** a civil servant with the right combo of intelligence, diligence, motivation and strategy. So, if you come from humble backgrounds or from a weaker section/gender/class - this is **The Job** that can empower you and you, in-turn, can empower thousands and lakhs of common people. Be driven by that, be fired by that!

Make no mistakes though, this is a tough exam and so it should be too, for it gets you **THE TOP JOBS** in the country. But hey, when the going gets tough, the tough gets going. So, tell yourself "I'm willing to suffer today, for a better tomorrow". They say those who sweat in peace, don't have to bleed in war. So, prepare yourselves adequately for this war - with the right arsenal, the right strategy, the right work ethics and the right attitude. This exam is tough, but not as tough as it is often made out to be. Dream big, create commensurate processes, believe in your processes and believe in yourself! If your processes are right, the results are bound to be right - sooner or later, in fact sooner rather than later!

Finally, I'll tell you what a teacher of mine at SRCC, my alma mater, had told everyone in our passing out batch - make sure you get what you like, else you'll have to like what you get.

Best of luck.

Jai Hind!



## IPS Preeti Kumari



In J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord Of The Rings*, when the protagonist Frodo Baggins sets out for Mount Doom, he whispers, "But I do not know the way." He has taken up a monumental goal, unaware of how he can achieve it. He doesn't know the way, yet he steps forward, embracing a journey brimming with challenges he can scarcely foresee.

When I began college at the University of Delhi, I, too, glimpsed my own "Mount Doom," yet I also knew that "I do not know the way." Through the wrong turns and the right ones, along paths crowded or deserted, I navigated my own adventure with the UPSC Civil Services Exam. And an adventure it has been—filled with trials and triumphs, persistence and satisfaction. If you choose Civil Services, I invite you to see it as I have: a challenging adventure, both arduous and exhilarating.

The journey truly begins when you hear that inner voice, that unmistakable call telling you why this goal matters to you. For if your "why" is clear, the "how" will gradually appear, guiding you step by step. That's how it is in life.

College is a time to tune into this inner voice, to find your inner compass. As you navigate independence and adulthood, you'll begin to ask: Are my dreams truly mine, or the echoes of others' expectations? Here, where your interests, talents, and ambitions converge, you'll start discerning what you're truly drawn to. This self-discovery is the most vital gift college can offer.

To fully unravel this path, don't limit yourself to textbooks or UPSC guides alone—that would be a disservice to yourself. You have the intellect to master what's in these books when you will write the exam, but life will demand more from you than academic knowledge. It will call for resilience when the journey gets tough. This is where life skills, patience, and emotional fortitude are essential; they keep you from faltering on steep climbs.

So, as you pursue this dream, equip yourself with skills that will help you excel: think critically, write persuasively, see issues from multiple angles, and learn to engage with people from a space of respect and humility. Let your values align with the Constitution of India, respecting laws and principles that shape our society. You'll need persistence, patience, dedication, and a singular focus to give this journey your best.

College is the perfect arena to build these skills—through extracurriculars, leadership roles, and creative pursuits. Academics alone won't cut it. In every field, what's needed is dynamism, adaptability, and creativity.

Specifically for the exam, I spent my college days reading newspapers, studying the UPSC CSE syllabus, past year questions, and polishing my thinking and writing skills for the exam. I never limited myself to mere academics and was active in extracurriculars as well. Whenever I could, I also participated in essay competitions, honing my writing skills until I began to win. You can do the same; start by summarizing editorials or articles, sharpening both language and thought.

When choosing electives in every semester, consider those connected to the UPSC syllabus—they'll deepen your knowledge. And if certain subjects seem daunting, approach them creatively. If history feels intimidating, pick up one of William Dalrymple's books and discover the wonder within. Remember, this exam demands a grasp of every subject's role in the larger world. A civil servant must know the basics of space technology as well as the richness of ancient Indian history. Embrace the syllabus as a doorway to knowledge, and soon you'll be captivated by the world's it opens for you.

Once you've set foot in this world, there's no turning back. Until then, dream boldly, for college will be among the most transformative years of your life. Pursue your passions, read widely, explore new places with friends, and grow into the best version of yourself.

If you can dream it, you can achieve it. But it will require you to seize each day, or as John Keating urges in *Dead Poets Society*: "Carpe Diem!"

# ***Words That Matter***



## ***IPS Abhishek Vashishtha***

**Dear Aspirants of Bharti College,**

**This is Abhishek Vashishtha, IPS, reaching out to commend your dedication to the noble journey of civil services preparation. Remember, success in this path demands discipline, consistency, and a vision to serve our nation. Every challenge you face is an opportunity to grow stronger, and every failure a step closer to success. Stay focused, make your preparation holistic, and never underestimate the power of self-belief. The nation awaits leaders like you to bring about positive change. Wishing you all the very best for your future endeavors. Keep striving and shine bright!**

**Warm regards,**

**Abhishek Vashishtha, IPS**



# ***Words That Matter***



## ***IPS Navneet Anand***

**Dear Aspirants of Bharti College,**

**I know how it feels to succeed after years of handwork and i also know how it feels to fail after giving your best effort. I know it is never easy to assume that you have all that it takes to crack this exam. You actually don't have to trust in your full potential now, you only need to trust the small little actions you will take in next couple of minutes or next hour. Those little blocks of action will take you on a long journey where believing in your own potential will be the only option you will have and you will do that happily. And this is where the results will come. So take action , and those small steps will put you ahead for the next mental step! That is to continue pursuing your tasks even when you don't feel like doing it. Worship the process. The process is the biggest teacher we could ever have.**

**Warm regards,  
Navneet Anand, IPS**

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# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

## July 1, 2025

- **Seven-Point Strategy for Mobilising Private Capital in Sustainable Development**  
The Finance Minister unveiled a roadmap to attract private investments towards green and sustainable development projects.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy, Environment)
- **2 Draft Greenhouse Gas Emission Targets for Industries under Carbon Credit Scheme-** The Environment Ministry proposed new emission targets for industries, linking them to a carbon credit trading mechanism.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment)
- **3UNCTAD's 'World of Debt Report 2025' Highlights Rising Global Debt Burden-** The report stressed how growing debt disproportionately affects developing nations.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Issues)
- **4Quad Nations Launch 'Quad at the Sea' Observer Mission under Wilmington Declaration-** The Quad countries announced a new maritime security initiative to strengthen Indo-Pacific cooperation.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

## July 2, 2025

- **Employment-Linked Incentive Scheme for Formal Job Creation Approved -** The Union Cabinet cleared a scheme to incentivize industries for creating formal jobs, focusing on manufacturing.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy)
- **Commissioning of INS Tamal – A Guided Missile Frigate -** The Indian Navy inducted INS Tamal, a Russian-made guided missile frigate, boosting maritime defense.  
(GS Paper 3 – Security)
- **National Sports Policy 2025 Approved -** The new policy aims to make sports a mass movement, ensure social inclusion, and align with NEP.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance, Social Justice)

1 July

**National Doctors' Day (India)**

**Chartered Accountants' Day (India)**

**GST Day**

## ACHIEVEMENT

India reaches 20% ethanol blending in petrol, five years ahead of target  
Ethanol blending has surged from 1.5% in 2014 to 20% in 2025, saving nearly ₹1.36 lakh crore in foreign exchange and boosting rural incomes through ₹1.96 lakh crore payments to distilleries.

2 July

**World UFO Day**

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- Quad Meeting in Washington Focuses on Terrorism and Indo-Pacific Stability- India emphasized counter-terrorism cooperation and maritime security during the Quad dialogue.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

## July 3, 2025

- PM Modi's State Visit to Ghana to Strengthen Africa Engagement - PM Modi received Ghana's highest civilian honour and advanced India's outreach to Africa and Global South.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

- Quad Leaders Agree on Key Initiatives including Critical Mineral Cooperation - The Quad finalized plans for joint action on terrorism, maritime training, logistics, and ports partnership.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

- RBI Removes Prepayment Penalties on Floating-Rate Loans - The central bank barred additional charges on transferring floating-rate loans, easing borrower rules.

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

- India's First Unified Flood Forecasting Platform – 'C-Flood' Launched - A digital platform integrating flood alerts was introduced to enhance disaster preparedness.

(GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management)

## July 4, 2025

- India and Ghana Sign Four MoUs on Culture, Standards and Ayurveda Cooperation - The agreements deepen bilateral ties and promote traditional medicine collaboration.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

- WHO Launches '3 by 35' Initiative to Curb Harmful Products - The initiative seeks to raise taxes on tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks by 50% globally.

(GS Paper 2 – Health)

### ACHIEVEMENT

GST collections hit ₹1.96 trillion, up 7.5% year-on-year in July A strong indicator of economic activity and compliance, this growth reflects sustained fiscal health.

### 3 July

International Plastic Bag Free Day



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- NITI Aayog Report on Chemical Industry Integration into Global Value Chains- The report highlights policy steps to make India a trillion-dollar chemical hub by 2040.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy (Industry))
- Global Peace Index 2025 Places India at 115th Rank- India's ranking reflects internal security challenges and geopolitical concerns.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance, Internal Security)
- Centre gathering support to remove Justice Verma- The Centre is reportedly working to gather support for the removal of Justice Verma after burned currency notes were found at his residence in Delhi.  
(GS Paper 2- Governance)

## July 5, 2025

- Sub-Lieutenant Astha Poonia Becomes India's First Woman Navy Fighter Pilot This marks a historic step towards gender inclusion in combat roles in the Navy.  
(GS Paper 1 – Social Empowerment; GS Paper 3 – Security)
- PM Modi Receives Trinidad and Tobago's Highest Civilian Award The visit strengthened India's ties with the Caribbean and promoted diaspora engagement.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- International Conference Adopts 'Sevillian Commitment' on Sustainable Mining A new global framework was adopted for responsible mining of aluminium and copper.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment, Economy)
- Russia Recognizes Taliban Government in Afghanistan Russia became the first country to formally acknowledge the Taliban regime, affecting regional geopolitics.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

## July 6, 2025

- India Imposes Retaliatory Tariffs on US Auto Parts under WTO Rules India increased tariffs on select US products as a countermeasure against American duties on Indian auto parts.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations ; GS Paper 3 – Economy)

### ACHIEVEMENT

India-UK Free Trade Agreement signed on 24 July This marks India's first comprehensive FTA with a European nation, aiming to deepen trade, investment, and strategic cooperation.

### 5 July

**International Day of Cooperatives**

### 6 July

**World Zoonoses Day**

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- India Advocates Reform of Global Credit Rating and MDBs at Spain Conference At the 4th Financing for Development Conference, India's Finance Minister called for reforms in sovereign credit ratings and MDBs for equity and sustainability.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations ; GS Paper 3 – Economy)
- World Bank Report Ranks India 4th Most Equal Country India's Gini Index of 25.5 places it among the most equal countries after Slovakia, Slovenia, and Belarus.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance, Social Justice)
- Alarming Levels of Microplastics and Chemicals Found in Human Tissues Studies reveal health risks like fertility issues and cancers due to high plastic pollution; India is the top plastic waste generator.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment, Health)
- Kerala to launch its first skin bank in Thiruvananthapuram - First skin bank will be inaugurated on World Plastic Surgery Day (July 15) and has been authorized by the Kerala Sate Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization.  
(GS Paper 3- Health)
- Supreme Court introduces quota for OBCs, SCs, and STs in direct staff recruitment- CJI B.R. Gaval amended the staff recruitment rules (Rule 4A of SC officers and servants (conditions of service & conduct) rules 1961)  
(GS Paper 2- Governance)

## July 7, 2025

- 17th BRICS Summit in Brazil Focuses on Global South Cooperation The Rio summit emphasized inclusive governance and sustainable development for the Global South.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- BRICS Adopts Climate Finance Framework and AI Governance Statement Leaders released declarations on climate finance, AI governance, and eliminating socially determined diseases.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- India Inaugurates National Bio Bank and Longitudinal Population Data Study This aims to improve health research, disease prevention, and data-driven policymaking.  
(GS Paper 2 – Health; GS Paper 3 – Science & Tech)
- Indian Army Launches Defence Modernisation Roadmap A comprehensive plan for advanced weapons, cyber warfare, and soldier-centric modernization was unveiled.  
(GS Paper 3 – Security)

### ACHIEVEMENT

NISAR satellite launched India-US joint mission dual-frequency SAR satellite to monitor Earth surface shifts, glaciers, and disasters enhancing climate resilience and scientific collaboration.





# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

## July 8, 2025

- India Abstains on UNGA Resolution on Afghanistan India withheld support citing lack of targeted measures against terrorism in the resolution.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- Kaladan Multimodal Transit Project to be Operational by 2027 A strategic India-Myanmar project enabling multimodal cargo transport between Eastern Indian ports and Myanmar.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations; GS Paper 3 – Infrastructure)
- NITI Aayog Releases District SDG Index for Northeast India Hnahthial district in Mizoram emerged as the top performer in SDG implementation.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance, Social Justice)
- India-Japan Joint Exercise 'JAA MATA' Begins in Chennai. The exercise focuses on enhancing maritime security and defence cooperation.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations; GS Paper 3 – Security)
- Myanmar ethnic crisis drives 4000 Chin people to Mizoram - Ongoing ethnic violence in Myanmar has forced around 4,000 Chin people to flee and take refuge in Mizoram, India.  
(GS Paper- 2 - International Relations ; GS Paper 3- Internal Security )

## July 9, 2025

- India Has 8% of Global Rare Earth Reserves but Only 1% Mining Output A CareEdge report highlights the gap between resource potential and mining capacity.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy, Resources)
- 2PM Modi's Brazil Visit Secures 6 Agreements, Targets \$20 Billion Trade He received Brazil's highest civilian award and boosted bilateral economic ties.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

### ACHIEVEMENT

Sigandur  
Cable-Stayed  
Bridge inaugurated  
in Karnataka (16  
July) At 2.44 km,  
India's second-  
longest  
cable-stayed bridge  
connects rural  
zones, restores lost  
road links, and links  
the iconic  
Chowdeshwari  
temple region

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **MoEFCC Notifies New Hazardous Waste Rules 2025** Includes an extended producer responsibility framework for non-ferrous metal scrap.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment)
- **Bihar Announces 35% Domicile Reservation for Women in Government Jobs** A major step towards women's empowerment and social inclusion.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance, Social Justice)
- **Rare Great Hornbill sighting in Ezhimala sparks renewed calls for biodiversity conservation** - Great Hornbill, Kerala State Bird found near-coastal belt of Kakkampara, near Ezhimala, Kannur.  
(GS Paper 3 - Environment)
- **Terror attack accused in India used online payment services, e-commerce sites: FATF**  
Global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog FATF has said that accused in two recent terror attacks in India used online payment services, e-commerce platforms, and Virtual Private Networks (VPSs).  
(GS Paper 3- Internal Security, Money laundering)

## July 10, 2025

- **1PM Modi's Namibia Visit Strengthens Ties in Health, Agriculture, Biofuel Alliance**  
Namibia adopts UPI-based digital payments; PM received Namibia's highest civilian honour.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- **Operational Guidelines for Aspirational DMF Programme Launched**  
Convergence of district mineral funds with aspirational district and block programmes.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance; GS Paper 3 – Economy, Mining)
- **1INS Nistar – India's First Indigenous Diving Support Vessel Commissioned** It will support deep submergence rescue vessels for operations up to 300m.  
(GS Paper 3 – Security, Science & Tech)

## ACHIEVEMENT

Himachal Pradesh launches Aadhaar Face Authentication for PDS delivery The state pioneered the use of Aadhaar-based face recognition in ration distribution, replacing legacy authentication to boost efficiency and inclusion.



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last  
month and what's to come!

- **ISRO Authorises Starlink for Satellite Services in India**  
In-space granted a 5-year authorisation to Starlink to expand broadband connectivity.  
(GS Paper 3 – Science & Tech)

## July 11, 2025

- **India Launches 'Talash' Digital Program for Tribal Students**  
A new platform for self-discovery, life skills, and career guidance for tribal youth.  
(GS Paper 2 – Education)
- **India Prepares for 8th WTO Trade Policy Review, Calls for Reforms Within WTO**  
India seeks WTO reforms while opposing calls for parallel trade mechanisms by the EU.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations, WTO)
- **Supreme Court Suggests Linking Aadhaar, Ration, Voter Cards for Electoral Rolls**  
SC allowed EC to continue voter list revision but pushed for broader document inclusion.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity, Electoral Reforms)
- **Agra Launches India's First Integrated Waste Management City under SBM-U**  
A model city for sustainable urban waste processing and recycling.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment, Urban Development)

**11 July**  
**World  
Population Day**

**12 July**  
**Malala Day**

## June 12, 2025

- **Uttarakhand Approves Geo-Thermal Energy Policy 2025**  
Aimed at promoting research and development of viable geothermal resources.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment, Energy)

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **Maratha Fort System Gets UNESCO World Heritage Tag**  
Twelve forts showcasing advanced military architecture and adaptation to diverse terrains gain recognition.  
(GS Paper 1 – Art & Culture, Heritage)
- **UNEP 'Frontier 25: The Weight of Time' Report Released**  
Highlights challenges like reactivation of microbes in warming cryosphere and demographic shifts.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment)
- **Sanchar Mitra Scheme Launched Nationwide to Promote Digital Literacy**  
Youth to act as digital ambassadors for expanding digital inclusion.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance, Digital India)

## June 13, 2025

- **Study Shows Poor Households Turning to Informal Sector Loans**  
Borrowers from weaker sections have contracted to 4.2%, indicating financial stress.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy)
- **Jaishankar Holds SCO Consultations in Singapore and China**  
Strengthening cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation framework.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- **IPS Sonali Mishra Becomes First Woman to Lead Railway Protection Force**  
A milestone in gender representation in security services. (GS Paper 1 – Social Empowerment).  
(GS Paper 3 – Security)
- **Bank for International Settlements Highlights Stablecoins' Role in Currency Domination**  
BIS notes stablecoins emerging as tools in global currency competition.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy, Technology)

### ACHIEVEMENT

Divya Deshmukh crowned Women's Chess World Cup winner, becomes Grandmaster Defeated Koneru Humpy in FIDE World Cup final, marking her as India's third GM from Nagpur and a spot in Candidates Tournament.



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

## July 14, 2025

- Singapore Recognises India's Growing Role in a Multipolar World Order  
Singapore's foreign minister emphasized India's rising global influence.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- Environment Ministry Eases Flue Gas Desulphurisation Norms for Thermal Power Plants  
Relaxation aimed at balancing power needs with emission control.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment, Energy)
- India to Launch First Weather Derivatives Market Based on Rainfall Data  
Innovative derivatives linked to meteorological parameters for climate risk management.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy, Disaster Management)
- India-Saudi Arabia Sign Long-Term Fertilizer Supply Agreement  
Securing 3.1 million tonnes of DAP supply for agricultural security.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations; GS Paper 3 – Economy, Agriculture)

## June 15, 2025

- Jaishankar Meets Chinese Foreign Minister to Discuss Border De-escalation  
Talks focus on improving India-China ties and resolving disputes.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- Cyber Frauds Cost India ₹7,000 Cr in Five Months, MHA Data Shows  
Highlights urgent need for stronger cyber security frameworks.  
(GS Paper 3 – Internal Security, Technology)
- Retail Inflation Eases to 2.1% in June, Room for RBI Rate Cuts  
CPI drop signals potential monetary easing to boost growth.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy)
- India Achieves 50% Clean Power Capacity Milestone  
A significant step towards energy transition and renewable goals.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment, Energy)

### ACHIEVEMENT

Animesh Kujur sets new Indian 100 m record (10.18s) First Indian to break the 10.2s barrier in 100m (at an event in Greece, 5 July), also holding titles in 200m and relay. Major leap in national sprinting standards.

15 July

World Youth Skills Day

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

## July 16, 2025

- **Decline in Women's Workforce Participation** - India's female labour force participation dropped to 24%, far below global averages, highlighting persistent gender inequality and structural barriers to inclusive growth.  
(GS Paper 1 – Society | GS Paper 2 – Welfare Schemes)
- **97% Untouchability Cases Still Pending in Courts** - Backlog of atrocities cases under SC/ST Act raises concerns about access to justice for marginalised communities.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity (Vulnerable Sections))
- **Services Exports Narrowed Trade Deficit by 9.4%** - India's surplus in services such as IT and consulting helped offset the merchandise trade deficit.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy (External Sector))
- **Debate on Forest Governance Models** - Ecologist Madhav Gadgil argues for community-led forest conservation over bureaucratic control, linking it to biodiversity and tribal rights.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance ; GS Paper 3 – Environment)
- **DRDO-AIIMS Launch Indigenous Carbon Fibre Prosthesis** - Affordable ₹25,000 limbs promote inclusive healthcare under 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.  
(GS Paper 3 – Science & Tech, Health)
- **Jaishankar Reiterates India's Stance on Terrorism at SCO** - At the SCO Summit, Jaishankar reaffirmed India's zero-tolerance stance on terrorism and urged united global action against terror networks and their sponsors.
- **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** - UIDAI announced improvements in Aadhaar authentication to strengthen digital public infrastructure and streamline welfare service delivery. This move aims to enhance transparency and ease of access for beneficiaries.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance ; GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology)

### ACHIEVEMENT

India women's cricket team wins historic T20I series in England  
On 9 July, the team secured their first-ever T20I series win in England (3–1), echoing India's first ODI series win in England 26 years prior.



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

## July 17, 2025

- Govt Merges 36 Agri Schemes into PM Krishi Samriddhi Yojana - Scheme rationalisation aims to increase efficiency, reduce redundancy, and improve farm sector outcomes.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy (Agriculture))
- India's First Tribal Genome Project Launched in Gujarat - ICMR aims to sequence genetic data of tribal groups for targeted healthcare and disease prevention.  
(GS Paper 3 – Science & Tech ; GS Paper 2 – Health)
- India Seeks U.S. Approval for Javelin Missile Co-Production - India has formally submitted a Letter of Request to the U.S. seeking approval to co-produce the FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank guided missile under its *Make in India* initiative. This move, aimed at boosting domestic defense production, would enhance India's operational readiness along its Pakistan and China borders while reducing import reliance.  
(GS Paper 2 – IR ; GS Paper 3 – Defence)
- Lok Sabha to Debate Motion to Remove Justice Varma - Initiation of bipartisan impeachment reflects judiciary accountability mechanisms in action.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance (Judiciary))

## July 18, 2025

- India Slams U.S. Sanctions Threat Over Russian Oil - India cautioned against “double standards” on Russian oil imports, defending its energy security needs. Petroleum Minister said India now imports oil from 40+ countries.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations ; GS Paper 3 – Energy Security)

**18 July**  
**Nelson Mandela International Day**

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **Judicial Panel Blames RCB, KSCA for Bengaluru Stamped** - A panel held event organisers and police responsible for the IPL celebration stampede that killed 11. Legal action recommended against sports bodies and officials.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance ; GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management)
- **Temple Entry Cannot Be Denied by Caste: HC** - Madras High Court directed police to ensure Dalits' access to a temple amid caste-based obstruction. Invoked constitutional equality and 1947 Temple Entry Act.  
(GS Paper 1 – Society ; GS Paper 2 – Polity (Rights of SCs))
- **ED Raids Religious Conversion Racket in U.P.** - ED raided 14 locations tied to Chhangur Baba in a conversion and money laundering case. Highlights link between religion and illicit finance.  
(GS Paper 3 – Internal Security ; GS Paper 2 – Governance)
- **Glitches in Poshan App Hit Nutrition Delivery** - Facial recognition failures and Aadhaar mismatches block beneficiaries from availing health aid. Anganwadi workers struggle with tech and poor connectivity.  
(GS Paper 2 – Welfare Schemes ; GS Paper 3 – Tech in Governance)
- **Odisha Erupts Over Girl's Suicide After Harassment** - A 20-year-old student in Odisha died by suicide after facing prolonged sexual harassment by her college HoD, sparking statewide protests and legal action. The incident highlighted institutional failure, leading to UGC intervention and renewed focus on enforcing the POSH Act in educational institutions.  
(GS Paper 1 – Society (Gender issues) ; GS Paper 2 – Social Justice)

## ACHIEVEMENT

India ranks 7th in International Mathematical Olympiad 2025  
India's best-ever finish among 110 countries, with 3 gold, 2 silver, and 1 bronze medal; total score 193/252.

## July 19, 2025

- **V-P Election Notification Issued; Returning Officer Appointed** - The Election Commission has issued the notification for the Vice-Presidential election. Rajya Sabha Secretary-General P.C. Mody has been appointed as the Returning Officer. This follows Vice-President Dhankhar's resignation.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity)
- **SC: States Can't Seek Delimitation Parity with J&K** - Court affirms that J&K's delimitation was due to special circumstances and not a precedent.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity)



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last  
month and what's to come!

- Doklam to Reopen for Tourists After 8 Years :  
China-Bhutan-India strategic tri-junction reopens; has geopolitical and security implications.  
(GS Paper 1 – Geography (Places in News))

## July 20, 2025

- Rajasthan Becomes First to Approve Gig Workers Law - Rajasthan has passed a pioneering law ensuring social security benefits for gig and platform workers like those working for Zomato, Ola, and Swiggy. The law includes provisions for welfare boards and contributory funds for workers.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance ; GS Paper 3 – Economy (Informal Sector))
- India Hits 20% Ethanol Blending Target – 5 Years Early - India has achieved 20% ethanol blending in petrol, five years ahead of its 2030 deadline. This has helped save ₹41,500 crore in oil import bills and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.  
(GS Paper 3- Environment , Energy)
- Bihar's Mica Belt and Child Labour Concerns - Illegal mica mining in Nawada and Koderma districts is causing school dropouts and increased child labour. Lack of regulation and poverty continue to fuel this unsafe and exploitative work.  
(GS Paper 2 – Social Justice ; GS Paper 1 – Society )
- India Launches DAKSHA UAVs for Disaster Relief - India has introduced DAKSHA drones for quick aerial assessment in disaster-prone areas like floods. These UAVs will help NDRF and NDMA in rescue planning by mapping damage and hazards.  
(GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management ; Science & Tech)
- India Joins Global Biofuel Alliance at G20 Meet - India has formally joined the Global Biofuel Alliance to promote cleaner, sustainable energy sources. It aims to reach 30% biofuel blending by 2030 as part of its green transition strategy.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment , Energy)

20 July  
**World Chess  
Day**

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **Haryana's Water-Logging Crisis Highlights Urban Planning Failure** - Heavy flooding in Gurugram reveals critical flaws in urban drainage and planning systems. Unregulated construction and weak governance are worsening water-logging problems in urban areas.

(GS Paper 1 – Geography (Urban Issues) ; GS Paper 2 – Governance)

## July 21, 2025

- **India Reaffirms Support for Palestine at UN** - India reaffirmed its support for Palestine at the UN, calling for a two-state solution and peaceful coexistence with Israel. It urged de-escalation, protection of civilians, and backed Palestine's full UN membership.

(GS Paper 2 – IR (India-West Asia))

- **SC/ST Cases Must Have FIR Without Inquiry: Allahabad HC** - The court upheld that any complaint under SC/ST Atrocities Act must directly lead to FIR, to prevent delay.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance , Social Justice)

- **Coral Cover in Lakshadweep Down by 50% in 24 Years** - Coral cover in Lakshadweep has declined by 50% over the past 24 years due to rising sea temperatures and bleaching events. Experts warn this threatens marine biodiversity. Urgent conservation efforts are needed.

(GS Paper 3 – Environment (Biodiversity, Climate Change))

- **Shah Moves to Extend President's Rule in Manipur** - Home Minister Amit Shah moved a proposal to extend President's Rule in Manipur amid ongoing ethnic violence. The move follows continued instability and security concerns.

(GS Paper 2 – Polity , Federalism)

- **PM's Maldives Visit Revives Ties Amid China Factor** - PM Modi's visit to the Maldives aimed to revive strained ties and strengthen regional cooperation. The move counters growing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean. Both nations agreed to boost defence and development partnerships.

(GS Paper 2 – IR (India's Neighborhood Policy))

## ACHIEVEMENT

Neeraj Chopra  
Classic 2025  
inaugurated on 5  
July India's first  
International  
Gold-level javelin  
event held in  
Bengaluru; Neeraj  
Chopra won with a  
throw of 86.18 m.

21 July

Guru  
Purnima



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **New Cooperative Policy Prioritises Dalits, Women, Adivasis - Aims to empower marginalised communities via SHGs, FPOs, and cooperative credit.**

(GS Paper 2 – Governance , Social Justice)

## July 22, 2025

- **Climate Events Rising: Drowning Prevention Is Key Focus - UN experts warn of rising climate-related flooding and need for improved early warning, infrastructure.**

(GS Paper 3 – Environment , Disaster Management)

- **India-UK FTA May Hurt Public Health Access: Experts**  
Experts warn the India-UK Free Trade Agreement may limit access to affordable medicines by enforcing IP rules This could impact public health, especially in low-income countries. They urge safeguards to protect drug availability.

(GS Paper 2 – IR ; GS Paper 3 – Economy (TRIPS, IP))

- **Fault Lines in India's Electoral System - Concerns raised over criminal candidates, funding opacity, and ECI independence.**

(GS Paper 2 – Polity ; Electoral Reforms)

- **ECI Defends Voter Privacy in Counter-Affidavit :**  
Denies charges of EVM-VVPAT mismatch and data harvesting in Supreme Court affidavit.

(GS Paper 2 – Polity (Election Commission))

- **India to Launch 3 Navigation Satellites by 2026 - India will launch three navigation satellites by 2026 to boost its NavIC system. This aims to improve regional positioning accuracy and reduce reliance on foreign GPS. The satellites will enhance navigation for civilian and military use.**

(GS Paper 3 – Space Tech)

## ACHIEVEMENT

INS Tamal (last foreign-built Talwar-class frigate) commissioned into Indian Navy on 3 July in Russia; marks transition toward domestic indigenisation in naval defence.

22 July

Pi  
Approximation  
Day



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- ICJ's Climate Change Advisory is Legally Significant - ICJ may compel states to act on emissions, elevating climate justice.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment , International Law)
- National Sports Governance Bill Introduced in Lok Sabha - Proposes stricter accountability in sports bodies and athlete protection mechanisms.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance , Sports Policy)

## July 23,2025

- Dhankhar's Resignation Notified - Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation triggers immediate need for elections. Raises constitutional questions on succession and Rajya Sabha functioning.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance)
- India-U.S. Trade Deal Stalemate - The India-U.S. trade deal remains stalled over key issues like tariffs, agriculture, and digital trade rules. Both sides have failed to reach a consensus despite talks. Negotiations are ongoing to resolve differences.  
(GS Paper 2 – IR ; GS Paper 3 – Economy)
- RBI Financial Inclusion Index Rises to 67 - Index shows growth in banking, insurance, and tech access. Indicates success of digital schemes like PMJDY and UPI.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy)
- World Bank Warns of Urban Climate Risks - Indian cities may lose \$5 billion to floods by 2030. Calls for stronger urban autonomy and climate resilience.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment ; GS Paper 3 – Economy)
- MiG-21 Retirement; Apache Helicopters Inducted - India retires its oldest fighter jets, modernizes with Apaches. Signals defence upgrade and strategic preparedness.  
(GS Paper 3 – Defence)

## ACHIEVEMENT

India-Japan joint coast guard exercise 'Jaa Mata' off Chennai (7-12 July) A maritime security drill enhancing interoperability and Indo-Pacific maritime cooperation.



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- India's Progress on Sickle Cell Elimination Mission - 6 crore people screened under national health mission. Aims to eradicate tribal genetic disorder through early detection.

(GS Paper 2 – Health)

- Nuclear Power and Clean Energy Goals - India re-evaluates nuclear energy role in energy security. Highlights clean alternatives amid climate targets.

(GS Paper 3 – Science & Tech)

## July 24, 2025

- India, China and the Brahmaputra Front - The article explores rising concerns over Chinese dam-building on the Brahmaputra River and its strategic implication.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

- Sports Bill Introduced in Lok Sabha - The proposed Bill aims to bring all sports federations under one regulatory board. It has implications for governance, transparency, and autonomy in sports bodies.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

- Vitamin D Deficiency and Child Neurodevelopment - New findings show that maternal vitamin D deficiency can cause long-term mental health and cognitive issues. It emphasizes preventive health and early childhood development.

(GS Paper 2 – Health)

- Critical Minerals as Strategic Assets - India's growing dependence on imports for rare earths and battery minerals could hinder energy transition and security. Urgency for domestic exploration and global partnerships is emphasized.

(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

24 July  
**Income Tax Day (India)**

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- ICMR's New Malaria Vaccine Trial - A potential breakthrough with the Indian Council of Medical Research developing a vaccine. It could play a key role in eradicating vector-borne diseases.

(GS Paper 2 – Health)

- Swachh Survekshan Takeaways - The annual cleanliness survey shows improvement in solid waste management and sanitation access. It reflects progress in urban governance and citizen participation.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

## July 25, 2025

- India-UK Sign Trade Pact & Extend Vision Framework - India and the UK signed a Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement and launched the 'India-U.K. Vision 2035', enhancing cooperation in trade, aerospace, medical devices, and services. The deal benefits sectors like Indian MSMEs, jewellery, seafood exports, and reduces tariffs for British products. It is UK's biggest trade deal post-Brexit.

(GS Paper 2 – International Relations ; GS Paper 3 – Economy)

- SC Stays Use of 2006 Bombs Acquittal as Legal Precedent - The Supreme Court stayed the use of the Bombay HC's acquittal of 12 men in the 7/11 Mumbai blasts case as a precedent in future MCOCA trials. The court clarified that acquitted individuals won't be rearrested, but legal findings won't influence other trials. This ensures case-specific scrutiny in organized crime cases.

(GS Paper 2 – Polity & Governance (Judiciary, Criminal Justice System))

- SC Directs HC to Examine Bhopal Gas Victim Misclassification - Supreme Court allowed Bhopal gas tragedy victims to move MP High Court on claims of wrongful injury classification as minor/temporary. Petitioners allege this denied thousands of cancer/kidney patients fair compensation under Bhopal Gas Leak Act. Case highlights challenges in industrial disaster justice.

(GS Paper 2 – Governance ; GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management)

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

PM Modi awarded Ghana's Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana On 3 July, Prime Minister Modi received Ghana's highest civilian honour, strengthening diplomatic ties with African partners.



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **SC/ST Complaints Must Lead to FIR Without Inquiry: Madras HC** - Madras HC ruled that all cognizable complaints under the SC/ST Atrocities Act must directly lead to FIRs. Preliminary inquiries are not required as per 2018 amendments. Reinforces speedy justice for marginalized communities.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity & Governance (SC/ST Welfare & Judiciary))
- **Centre Has No Plan to Amend 'Secularism' & 'Socialism' in Preamble** - Law Minister clarified in Rajya Sabha that there's no plan to remove 'secularism' or 'socialism' from the Preamble. Despite ideological debates, government stance aligns with SC's 2024 ruling affirming their place in Constitution. Ensures preservation of Basic Structure doctrine.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity (Constitutional Provisions, Preamble))
- **UAPA Applies to Secessionist Speech: J&K HC** - J&K High Court restored charges under UAPA against individuals advocating that J&K is illegally occupied by India. The court held that such speech amounts to advocating unlawful activity under Section 13 of UAPA. Shows judiciary's stance on secessionist rhetoric.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity & Internal Security)
- **Meghalaya HC to Hear PIL on Khasi Lineage Law** - PIL challenges provisions of Khasi Lineage Act which deny ST certificates based on surname adoption (father's or husband's). The HC will examine if surname choice can affect tribal identity in a matrilineal society. Reflects legal-cultural tensions in tribal laws.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity & Governance ; GS Paper 1 – Society (Tribal Issues))
- **National Cooperation Policy 2025 Released** - Union Minister Amit Shah unveiled new policy focusing on empowering Dalits, Adivasis, and women via cooperatives. Aims to strengthen cooperative federalism and inclusive economic models. Reinforces grassroots governance and social equity.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance (Inclusive Policy Initiatives))

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last  
month and what's to come!

## July 26, 2025

- **Lok Sabha to Take Up Motion to Remove Justice Varma** - A rare bipartisan motion has been introduced in Lok Sabha to remove Justice Varma over alleged misconduct. The move sheds light on the opaque and cumbersome process for judicial accountability. It highlights the need for reforms in ensuring transparency and ethics in the higher judiciary.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance (Judiciary, Accountability Mechanisms))
- **Muizzu Thanks India for Role in Maldives' Economic Recovery** - President Muizzu publicly acknowledged India's support in Maldives' economic revival, marking a diplomatic shift. India's developmental aid and infrastructure projects were recognised as pivotal. This suggests easing tensions and renewed cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations (India-Maldives Relations))
- **Centre Blocks 25 OTT Platforms for Obscene Content** - The Centre blocked 25 OTT platforms over vulgar content, invoking IT rules and public decency concerns. This action has reignited debates around censorship, artistic freedom, and regulatory overreach. It raises key questions on digital rights, state control, and content governance in India.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance (IT Rules, Freedom of Speech, Censorship))
- **185 Pakistani Refugees Granted Citizenship under CAA** - In the first implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 185 Pakistani minorities were granted Indian citizenship. This move may trigger political and legal debates over exclusion, especially regarding other refugee groups. It reflects Centre's commitment to the CAA amid continuing opposition and protests.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance (Citizenship, Refugee Policy, CAA))
- **Kargil and Pahalgam Security Revamp Underway** - Amid increased terror threats and intelligence inputs, the government is revamping security in Kargil and Pahalgam. The strategy includes tech-based surveillance, troop repositioning, and counter-infiltration measures. This reflects a proactive internal security response in strategically sensitive regions.  
(GS Paper 3 – Internal Security (Terrorism, Border Management))

26 July

**Kargil Vijay  
Diwas (India)**



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **Mangroves Gain Global Attention Thanks to Indian Scientist - Dr. M.S. Swaminathan's pioneering research helped elevate mangroves as critical ecosystems in global climate discourse. His advocacy led to policy integration of mangrove conservation in coastal planning. This recognition underlines India's contribution to sustainable environmental practices.**  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment (Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change))

## July 27, 2025

- **India–Maldives Diplomatic Reset : PM Modi's visit signals improved ties after Muizzu's 'India Out' campaign. Both leaders agreed to cooperate in defence, infrastructure, and economic development. Maldives balanced its sovereignty concerns while recognizing India's technical support.**  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- **Criminalisation of Journalists - NLU Delhi study shows most FIRs against journalists were for reporting on officials, religion, or protests. 40% were arrested, mostly from regional media lacking national visibility. Raises serious concerns about freedom of expression and misuse of state power.**  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance (Fundamental Rights, Press Freedom))
- **Bihar Voter List Revision Justified: EC - EC told SC that the Special Revision was necessary to address voter list inaccuracies. 66 lakh names may be removed; EC submitted 600+ pages of complaints. The move raises questions about voter suppression vs. Electoral integrity.**  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity (Election Commission, Electoral Reforms))
- **Yamuna Pollution from Panipat Textile Units - Illegal bleaching units in Panipat discharge toxic chemicals into Drain No. 2, reaching the Yamuna. Locals suffer skin diseases and water contamination; CPCB and NGT are investigating. The case reflects weak enforcement of environmental norms and industrial waste regulation.**  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment (Pollution Control, Water Quality))

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **Operation Sindoor: India's Response to Terrorism** - Army Chief said the operation was a direct message to Pakistan post-Pahalgam terror attack. Indigenous weapons used, showing Make-in-India defence capability. Highlights India's evolving military doctrine and firm stance on internal security.  
(GS Paper 3 – Internal Security (Cross-Border Terrorism))
- **NISAR Satellite: Indo-U.S. Space Collaboration** - The NASA-ISRO NISAR satellite will monitor natural hazards, agriculture, and forest changes. It uses dual-frequency radar for precise earth observation and climate analysis. A boost to India's disaster preparedness and global space cooperation.  
(GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology (Space Tech, Climate Monitoring))
- **India-UK Free Trade Agreement Benefits** - India-UK FTA allows 99% of Indian goods to enter UK duty-free, boosting MSME exports. Expected to generate jobs and increase foreign confidence in Indian manufacturing. Supports India's economic diplomacy and global trade expansion.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy (International Trade, MSMEs))
- **Delhi Riots Case: Court Acquits Six** - Court cited contradictions and weak evidence in the prosecution's case. Key police witness tried to manipulate identity proof by deleting photos. Case underlines importance of due process and credible investigation.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance (Judiciary, Communal Issues))

**July 28, 2025**

- **India, UAE to Set Up Virtual Trade Corridor** : A virtual trade corridor between India and UAE will cut transaction time by digitizing customs and port logistics. This aligns with broader trade facilitation efforts and strategic ties in West Asia.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations ; GS Paper 3 – Infrastructure)

**28 July**  
**World Nature Conservation Day**  
**World Hepatitis Day**



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last  
month and what's to come!

- **Law Commission Suggests Panel for Election Law Reforms -**  
The Law Commission proposes a dedicated panel to periodically revise electoral laws, focusing on EVM use, simultaneous polls, etc.  
It highlights the need for a dynamic approach to evolving democratic practices.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity (Electoral Reforms))
- **Supreme Court Seeks Center's Stand on Law to Regulate AI -**  
The SC asked the Centre whether India needs specific legislation to regulate Artificial Intelligence (AI).  
The case highlights concerns about AI's impact on privacy, bias, and job displacement.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance ; GS Paper 3 – Science & Tech (AI regulation))
- **Tamil Nadu to Launch 'Kalaigarn Magalir Urimal' Data Portal -**  
A new data platform will ensure better tracking and transparency of the ₹1000/month women's basic income scheme.  
It uses Aadhaar and bank linking to reduce leakages.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance (Welfare Schemes))
- **Cyclone Warning System Strengthened in Bay of Bengal -**  
IMD deploys upgraded satellite-based early warning systems along the Bay of Bengal coast.  
It enhances India's climate resilience amid increasing extreme weather events.  
(GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management | Environment)
- **SC: No Relief for Candidates Hiding Criminal Cases -**  
The Supreme Court ruled that election candidates suppressing criminal cases can't seek relief later under the Representation of People Act.  
It reasserts transparency and fair play in elections.  
(GS Paper 2 – Polity (Electoral Reforms, Judiciary))
- **New Study: Himalayan Glaciers Melting Faster Than Predicted -**  
Research finds accelerated glacial melt in the Himalayas, exceeding IPCC projections.  
This threatens water security for millions in the Indo-Gangetic plain.  
(GS Paper 1 – Geography ; GS Paper 3 – Environment (Climate Change))
- **India Ranks Low in Global Energy Transition Index -**  
India lags in renewable integration, energy equity, and transition readiness in the World Economic Forum's Index.  
Need for faster green investments and infrastructure is emphasized.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy , Environment (Energy & Sustainability))

# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last  
month and what's to come!

**July 29, 2025**

- **SC to EC: Focus on Inclusion, Not Exclusion** - The Supreme Court directed the Election Commission to ensure voter inclusivity and fair registration. It highlighted the need to protect democratic rights and avoid disenfranchisement. This can lead to reforms in voter verification and electoral rolls.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance)
- **NISAR Satellite to Launch on GSLV Tomorrow** - The India-US Earth observation satellite NISAR is ready for launch, focusing on tracking climate change, natural disasters, and agriculture. It uses dual-frequency radar for high-resolution mapping of Earth's surface changes. This marks a milestone in Indo-US space collaboration and disaster preparedness.  
(GS Paper 3 – Science & Tech / Space)
- **India Has Highest Slum Clusters in Flood-Prone Areas** - A global study finds Indian urban slums highly exposed to flooding, especially in coastal and riverine cities. This reveals deep urban planning gaps and climate vulnerability among the poor. Better housing, drainage, and climate-resilient infrastructure are urgent needs.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment / Disaster Management)
- **Procedure to Redress Chemically Contaminated Sites Legalized** - India has adopted a formal legal framework to identify, assess, and clean up chemically contaminated land. It assigns responsibilities, enables enforcement, and supports environmental justice. This step strengthens India's commitment to sustainable development.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment)
- **Golden Jackals Show High Adaptability to Urban Areas** - Research in Kerala highlights how golden jackals survive in human-dominated areas, indicating ecological plasticity. While adaptive, this also poses new challenges for wildlife management. It reflects changing dynamics of conservation in urban ecosystems.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment)
- **India-Japan Discuss Bullet Train and Strategic Ties** - Officials from India and Japan reviewed progress on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train and bilateral strategic cooperation. The partnership focuses on infrastructure, clean energy, and Indo-Pacific security. It reflects growing convergence in economic and geopolitical interests.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)

**29 July**  
**International  
Tiger Day**



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **ICJ Climate Opinion: A Global Legal Compass** - The ICJ's advisory opinion stresses nations' legal duty to mitigate climate change under international law. It could influence future treaties, domestic policies, and environmental litigation. India must align governance with evolving global climate norms.  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance)

- **Revised SHAKTI Policy 2025 Announced** - The updated SHAKTI policy ensures transparent coal linkage through competitive bidding for power plants. It aims to reduce fuel insecurity, enhance efficiency, and attract private investment in the energy sector. This aligns with India's long-term energy transition goals.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy)

## July 30, 2025

- **DRDO Conducts Back-to-Back Tests of Pralay Missile** - India successfully test-fired the short-range ballistic missile 'Pralay', demonstrating precision and operational readiness. It boosts indigenous defence technology and strengthens tactical strike capabilities.  
(GS Paper 3 – Defence)
- **Kaziranga Ranks 3rd in Tiger Density After Corbett, Bandipur** - Kaziranga National Park has recorded the third-highest tiger density in India, reflecting effective wildlife conservation. Improved anti-poaching and habitat strategies have led to this success.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment (Achievement))
- **IMF Upgrades India's Growth Forecast Amid Global Uptick** - Citing strong domestic demand and policy stability, IMF revised India's GDP forecast upward. This reinforces India's position as the fastest-growing major economy.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy)
- **India's Outreach to Syria After Assad Era Begins** - India held official-level talks with Syrian ministers for the first time since the civil war, aiming to rebuild diplomatic relations. It signals New Delhi's renewed interest in West Asia's post-conflict geopolitics.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- **Grassland Bird Census Begins in Kaziranga National Park** - A dedicated census in Kaziranga is mapping the population of grassland-specific bird species. This enhances understanding of lesser-studied ecosystems and supports biodiversity planning.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment)



# Monthly News Highlight

Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

- **Flash Floods Increasing Across India Due to Climate Extremes -**  
Unpredictable rainfall and poor urban drainage are causing a rise in flash floods in Indian cities. It stresses the urgent need for climate-resilient infrastructure and forecasting systems.  
(GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management)
- **RBI Caps Bank & NBFC Investment in AIFs at 20% of Corpus -** The Reserve Bank of India limited institutional exposure to Alternative Investment Funds to prevent excessive financial risk. It aims to ensure liquidity management and market discipline.  
(GS Paper 3 – Economy)
- **Science Journal Retracts Controversial Arsenic Life Paper -**  
After prolonged scrutiny, the journal *Science* retracted a 2010 paper claiming a bacteria could survive on arsenic instead of phosphorus. This highlights the importance of scientific validation and peer review.  
(GS Paper 3 – Environment / Science & Tech)

## July 31, 2025

- **Trump imposed 25% tariff on India-**  
US President Donald Trump announced that imports from India would attract 25% tariffs plus a penalty, citing India's purchase of energy and military equipment's from Russia.  
(GS Paper 2 – International Relations)
- **Lok Sabha passed resolution to extend President's rule in Manipur-**  
The Lok Sabha passed a Statutory Resolution to extend President's rule in Manipur for six months  
(GS Paper 2 – Governance)
- **Earthquake in Russia triggers tsunami waves in Japan, US**  
An earthquake of magnitude 8.8 struck in Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula triggering tsunami waves near Kuril Islands in the Pacific Ocean.  
(GS Paper 3 – Disaster management ; GS Paper 1- Geography)



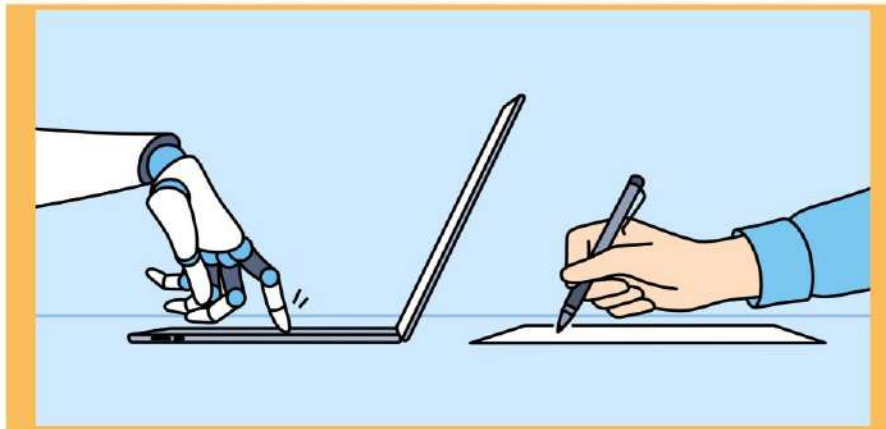


# WALK

NON-SCHOOL

WEEK-END

# ETHICS OF GENERATIVE AI IN EDUCATION AND GOVERNANCE



## INTRODUCTION

**Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)** has become increasingly pervasive in both education and governance, offering unprecedented efficiencies from automating lesson plans and assessments to supporting decisions in public policy. However, its rapid integration raises fundamental ethical issues, especially where human welfare, fairness, and legal rights are at stake. A balanced approach is essential to harness GenAI's benefits while mitigating its risks.

### GenAI in Education: Core Ethical Challenges :

#### 1. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

- The proliferation of GenAI tools enables students to quickly generate essays, reports, and even creative work by inputting simple prompts. This leads to crucial questions about who the real “author” is student or machine and threatens traditional models of learning, assessment, and authorship. Educators struggle to distinguish between original and AI-generated content, undermining the credibility of evaluation processes and posing new challenges for maintaining academic standards.
- Moreover, over-reliance on GenAI tools risks a decline in students’ critical thinking and autonomy. If these technologies substitute for real effort, learners may not internalize knowledge or develop vital analytical skills, ultimately impacting their intellectual growth and resilience.

#### 2. Algorithmic Bias and Cultural Representation:

- GenAI models are trained on vast datasets sourced predominantly from the internet and mass media. This data may perpetuate and amplify existing biases whether cultural, gender-based, racial, or socio-economic and thus, educational content produced or curated by GenAI may reinforce harmful stereotypes or marginalize underrepresented groups. For example, teaching materials or automated feedback might unknowingly reinforce discriminatory narratives, limiting the diversity and inclusiveness essential to well-rounded education.

#### 3. Equity in Access and Digital Literacy:

- Effective use of GenAI assumes access to high-speed networks, modern devices, and a baseline digital literacy. For students from marginalized or resource-constrained communities, these prerequisites are often unmet, deepening the existing digital divide. As GenAI transforms educational delivery and assessment, the risk is that well-resourced students benefit disproportionately, while others are left further behind.
- In addition, digital literacy is vital not just for students, but for educators, policymakers, and parents. Without it, GenAI tools may be misused or misunderstood, harming rather than advancing learning outcomes.



# ETHICS OF GENERATIVE AI IN EDUCATION AND GOVERNANCE

## 4. Student Data Privacy and Surveillance Risks:

- GenAI-driven platforms collect and process large volumes of sensitive data to offer personalized feedback and learning pathways. Without stringent safeguards and explicit informed consent, this data could be misused for commercial purposes or intrusive surveillance, eroding trust between students and educational institutions and potentially exposing young users to harm.

## 5. Transparency and Explainability:

- Algorithmic transparency, the ability to know how and why an AI system produced certain outputs is limited in many GenAI models. If students or teachers cannot understand or challenge the system's reasoning, there is a loss of confidence in AI-driven assessments and feedback. This "black box" challenge is central to discussions around fair, trustworthy AI in education.

## GenAI in Governance: Core Ethical Tensions:

### 1. Algorithmic Decision-making, Bias, and Accountability

GenAI tools are being used in predictive policing, welfare fraud detection, and public resource allocation. However, the quality and fairness of these outputs depend heavily on the data used for training. Systems trained on potentially biased or unrepresentative data can perpetuate discrimination, leading to unequal access to services, wrongful targeting, and a loss of civil liberties for vulnerable groups.

Because many AI applications in governance function as "black boxes," it can be difficult to understand or contest results. If a citizen is denied a social service due to an algorithmic decision, they may have no practical recourse unless mechanisms for explanation and appeal are embedded.

### 2. Manipulation and Democratic Participation

GenAI can be weaponized for mass misinformation from generating sophisticated deepfakes to bombardment of fake news during elections. These practices threaten the integrity of democratic processes and foster public distrust in governance. Mass surveillance enabled by AI analytics can also chill free expression, protest, and dissent, presenting fundamental risks to open societies.

### 3. Data Sovereignty and Ethical Data Use

Governments hold large amounts of personal data. Using GenAI to process, share, or sell this data raises crucial questions about consent, ownership, and long-term risk. Should public data be used to train commercial GenAI models? What are the boundaries for sharing with private firms? Robust frameworks for data sovereignty and governance are needed worldwide.

## Guiding Principles for Ethical GenAI Use :

Ethically deploying GenAI in education and governance requires the following guiding commitments:

- **Transparency:** Make AI systems and decision-making processes understandable to users and stakeholders.
- **Accountability:** Ensure that clear channels exist for addressing wrongful or biased AI-driven outcomes.
- **Privacy:** Design robust protections for personal data, with strict adherence to consent and data minimization.
- **Equity:** Prioritize reducing, not increasing, social and educational inequalities.
- **Human Oversight:** Insist that AI augments—rather than replaces—well-informed human judgment.

Policymakers and institutions should build institutional capacity, create interdisciplinary ethics committees, and foster digital literacy at all levels. Adaptive, participatory regulatory systems anchored in these principles are crucial for ensuring that GenAI supports democratic, inclusive, and rights-based progress.



# ETHICS OF GENERATIVE AI IN EDUCATION AND GOVERNANCE

## Write up

### INTRODUCTION

**Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is a new and powerful technology that can create human-like content such as text, images, videos, and voice.

It works by learning from a large amount of data and then generating new content that looks like it was made by a person.

Generative AI is now being used in many areas including **education** and **governance**, where it can help in learning, decision-making, and public service delivery.

But with these benefits, there are many **ethical concerns** that we must think about. Ethics means understanding what is right or wrong, fair or unfair, and how we treat others while using technology.

### ETHICS OF GENERATIVE AI IN EDUCATION

#### 1. Positive Uses:

- AI can help students learn better through personalized learning materials.
- It can assist teachers in grading, making lesson plans, or solving doubts.
- Tools like ChatGPT can help students with quick explanations and writing practice.

#### 2. Ethical Concerns:

##### -Misuse by Students

- Many students are using AI to write assignments or essays without actually understanding the topic.
- This is unethical because it promotes laziness, cheating, and a lack of learning.

##### -Loss of Creativity and Critical Thinking

- If students rely too much on AI, they may stop thinking on their own.
- This reduces the ability to develop original ideas or think critically.

##### -Bias in Content

- AI is trained on human data, which may carry biases (like gender, caste, or race).
- This can lead to unfair or incorrect learning materials being produced.

##### -Privacy Concerns

- Students and teachers often enter personal data into AI platforms.
- If these platforms are not secure, this information can be leaked or misused.

### -Access Inequality

- Not all students have equal access to AI tools or digital infrastructure.
- This can increase the gap between rich and poor students, harming equality in education.

### ETHICS OF GENERATIVE AI IN GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Positive Uses:

- AI can help the government in policy-making, solving complaints, managing disasters, and improving public services.
- It can save time and improve decision-making by analyzing big data quickly.

#### 2. Ethical Concerns:

##### -Bias and Discrimination

- If AI is trained on biased data, it may make unfair decisions.
- For example, it might deny welfare schemes to people from certain backgrounds.

##### -Lack of Transparency (Black Box Problem)

- Often, it is unclear how AI systems make decisions.
- This makes it hard for citizens to understand or question government decisions made using AI.

##### -Accountability Issues

- If something goes wrong because of AI, it is difficult to find out who is responsible – the developer, the officer, or the system?
- Without accountability, justice cannot be ensured.

##### -Surveillance and Privacy Violations

- AI can be used for mass surveillance through facial recognition or data tracking.
- This can lead to a loss of personal freedom and privacy, going against democratic values.

##### -Job Loss and Human Replacement

- AI may replace low-level government jobs, leading to unemployment.
- Ethical governance must balance automation with human dignity and rights.

### The Way Forward: Ethical Use of Generative AI

To ensure that generative AI is used in a **fair, responsible, and people-friendly** manner, the following steps are necessary:

#### 1. In Education:

- Teach students about **digital ethics** and responsible AI use.
- Encourage **human learning** and **creative thinking** over shortcuts.
- Set up **guidelines** in schools and colleges on how to use AI ethically.

#### 2. In Governance:

- Create clear **AI regulations** with **transparency, accountability, and fairness** as core values.
- Always keep **human oversight** in AI-based decisions.
- Establish **privacy protection laws** to safeguard citizen data.

### CONCLUSION: TO RISE, STAY ROOTED

Generative AI is a powerful tool that can bring revolutionary changes in education and governance. But it is not perfect. If used without ethical responsibility, it can lead to cheating, unfair decisions, data misuse, and inequality.

As a democratic society, we must ensure that AI is used in a way that supports **truth, fairness, inclusion, and justice**. The focus should not just be on what AI **can do**, but on what it **should do** – because technology must always serve the people, not control them.

By Harshita Drall  
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# DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH



## INTRODUCTION

**Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** refers to the essential digital systems that enable secure, scalable interaction among government, businesses, and citizens. Examples include Aadhaar for digital identity, UPI for payments, DigiLocker for document management, and other interoperable platforms. DPI is being hailed not merely as a technological base, but as a foundation for delivering inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance at scale, especially in fast-growing economies like India.

### Key Components of DPI :

#### 1. Digital Identity (Aadhaar):

- Aadhaar, as India's national biometric identity system, enables secure, authenticated access to a range of government services, banking, and telecommunications. The main advantage is the elimination of intermediaries and leakages in welfare delivery by providing a direct, verifiable link between the state and the individual. As a scalable digital backbone, Aadhaar has made social protection and subsidy disbursement more efficient and inclusive.

#### 2. Digital Payments (UPI):

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has democratized digital payments in India. It facilitates instantaneous, low-cost, interoperable transactions using smartphones. Street vendors and rural users who were traditionally excluded from formal banking can now participate fully in the digital economy, supporting inclusive growth, transparency, and record-keeping for small enterprises.

#### 3. Document and Data Portability (DigiLocker, ABHA, ONDC)

- DigiLocker allows for safe digital storage and retrieval of key documents, while the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) system secures digital health records. The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) is designed to make e-commerce accessible for micro- and small enterprises that lack resources to compete with larger platforms, thus decentralizing market power and supporting fair competition.

### DPI as a Catalyst for Inclusive Growth :

#### 1. Financial and Social Inclusion

- Digital infrastructure enables direct transfer of subsidies, pensions, and other welfare benefits, reducing corruption and ensuring last-mile service delivery. Combined with Jan Dhan bank accounts and Aadhaar authentication, DPI has allowed millions to participate in the formal financial system, fostering empowerment and agency for marginalized communities.

# DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

## 2. Empowering MSMEs and Informal Workers

DPI unlocks new credit opportunities and market access for micro, small, and medium enterprises. By providing digital payment history and alternative data points, it enables informal and first-time borrowers to access formal credit, fueling business expansion and job creation.

## 3. Accessible Health and Education

Platforms such as DIKSHA for remote learning and telemedicine initiatives using ABHA bridge the physical distance for rural populations. DPI's ability to rapidly redeploy—demonstrated during COVID-19 via CoWIN for vaccination management—shows its importance in public health resilience and crisis response.

## Challenges in DPI Implementation

### 1. Digital Divide

A significant proportion of rural, elderly, and marginalized populations remain excluded due to limited internet access, lack of devices, and inadequate digital skills. Efforts must focus on last-mile connectivity and targeting vulnerable groups to ensure equitability.

### 2. Privacy and Cybersecurity

The increasing scale and sensitivity of data stored in DPI systems amplify risks related to unauthorized access, breaches, or surveillance. A strong legal framework (such as the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023) and robust technical safeguards are critical for maintaining trust and public confidence.

### 3. Trust Deficit and Digital Literacy

Low digital literacy and fears of data misuse can limit uptake of DPI platforms. Building intuitive, multilingual interfaces and investing in widespread digital literacy campaigns—especially for women and disabled persons—can foster confidence and broad participation.

### 4. System Interoperability

Fragmented or siloed public digital systems hinder seamless service delivery. Developing robust protocols and standards for interoperability across financial, health, education, and identity platforms is vital for efficient, user-centric administration.

India's DPI model, exemplified by the modular **"India Stack"**, has received global acknowledgment, with the G20 and various partners recognizing its potential for international cooperation and scalable replication in developing countries. Open-source frameworks, public-private partnerships, and a consultative approach underpin this leadership, offering lessons for sustainable digital transformation globally.

**Pathways for Equitable DPI Growth**

To fully realize the transformative promise of DPI:

- **Expand Connectivity:** Invest systematically in high-speed internet, especially for rural/remote regions.
- **Enforce Data Protection:** Operationalize the DPDPA and design user-centric consent frameworks.
- **Promote Digital Literacy:** Implement national-level training, prioritizing those at risk of exclusion.
- **Enhance State Capacity:** Equip public servants to develop, manage, and regulate DPI with technical and ethical competence.
- **Deepen Participatory Governance:** Engage civil society and the private sector at all stages of DPI design and roll-out, ensuring platforms respond to real user needs.

The future of DPI is not simply digital transformation, but ethical and people-centered transformation, ensuring technology builds a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.



# DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

## Write up

### INTRODUCTION

**Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** refers to the foundational digital systems and services provided in the public interest to support and enhance the functioning of a digital economy and society.

The **DPI agenda gained prominence** in the global arena in a number of different G20 working groups under **India's G20 Presidency**. The G20 DEMM Outcome Document defines DPI as "a set of shared digital systems that should be secure and interoperable, and can be built on open standards and specifications to deliver and provide equitable access to public and / or private services at societal scale and are governed by applicable legal frameworks and enabling rules to drive development, inclusion, innovation, trust, and competition and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms."

### SERVICES UNDER DPI

Currently, DPIs can be categorised into five main groups which fall within and across multiple sectors (financial, health, education, e-commerce, agriculture, etc.). Some of these are:

- **Digital Identity Systems:** Platforms for verifying and managing individuals' identities online, such as Aadhaar in India, PhilSys in the Philippines, etc.
- **Digital Payment Systems:** Infrastructure that supports secure financial transactions, including digital wallets, payment gateways, and banking platforms.
- **Public Digital Services:** Online services provided by the government, such as e-governance portals, public health information, and digital education platforms. For instance, India's API Setu initiative and the open APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) published by India's Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN).
- **Data Infrastructure:** Systems for storing, managing, and sharing data securely, ensuring data sovereignty and privacy, such as Digilocker.

### INDIA'S OUTCOMES FROM DPI

India has achieved remarkable digital progress over the last decade by implementing DPI. In 2009, only 17% of adults in India had bank accounts, 15% used digital payments, one in twenty-five had a unique ID document, and about 37% had mobile phones. In the eight years to 2017, these numbers saw unprecedented growth: teledensity was up to 93%; over a billion people had a digital ID document, 80+% had bank accounts, and over 2 billion digital payment transactions were completed per month. **The Bank of International Settlements (BIS) estimated that progress which would have otherwise taken almost half a century was achieved in India in 8 years.** This progress depicts the inclusive growth of population through DPI, some of which are:

- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** Instant mobile digital payments interoperable across any bank account or app, scaled to over 10 billion transactions per month.
- **Aadhaar & eKYC:** Digital ID for over a billion adults with over 33B authentications. 44.7 million new bank accounts opened, bringing up banking penetration to 80%, and allowing ease of SIM card registration.
- **Aadhaar Enabled Payments System (AEPS):** An interoperable network of biometric-based cash withdrawal & deposits enabled by agents for 150 million people in small towns to complement physical ATMs.
- **DigiLocker:** An e-Locker for verifiable credentials, used by people to store identity documents, educational credentials, vaccination certificates, etc.
- **FastTag:** Streamlined toll charges and parking collections platform.
- **Bharat Bill Payments System, Account Aggregator and Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit, etc.**

### CHALLENGES TO INDIA'S DPI

- **Data Privacy and Security Concerns:** The extensive collection and use of personal data by DPIs raise significant concerns regarding data privacy.
- **Digital Divide:** Despite India's rapid digital advancement, there is still limited access to digital infrastructure, such as internet connectivity, digital literacy etc.
- **Monopolization of Digital Infrastructure:** The risk of monopolistic practices poses challenges such as profit erosion of smaller private entities due to their inability to upgrade themselves.

These are among several challenges faced by India despite the digital growth.

### CONCLUSION

DPI is an approach designed to solve multifaceted complex societal problems that ultimately require both public and private participation and innovation. India's G20 presidency showcased the transformative potential of DPI as a key driver of inclusive and sustainable development. To further **strengthen DPI resilience, India must adopt robust data protection frameworks, bridge the digital divide, develop adaptive regulations, and ensure the long-term sustainability of its digital infrastructure** through continuous innovation and public-private partnerships.

By Sakshi Kuntal

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# TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN REDEFINING INDIAN SOCIETY



## INTRODUCTION

- In the last three decades, India's tryst with technology has been nothing short of transformative. What began in the 1990s as a cautious opening of markets to foreign investment, coupled with modest advances in telecommunication, has evolved into a digital revolution touching nearly every corner of life.
- The story of technology in India is not merely about gadgets, apps, or high-speed internet, it is a story of how a nation of 1.4 billion people has renegotiated the meaning of opportunity, aspiration, and identity.

### From the Margins to the Mainstream

- India's early engagement with technology was urban-centric, benefiting primarily the English-speaking, well-connected middle class.
- Today, however, technology has shed its elitist shell. With the rapid fall in smartphone prices, the penetration of affordable internet through initiatives like Jio's data revolution, and the government's Digital India campaign, the divide between rural and urban access has narrowed significantly.
- Platforms once seen as luxuries have become indispensable tools of livelihood from farmers using real-time weather apps to artisans selling their handicrafts on global e-commerce platforms.

### Catalyst for Social Inclusion

- Perhaps the most striking aspect of this transformation is technology's role in social empowerment.
- India's Aadhaar system, the world's largest biometric identification programme, has streamlined welfare delivery, reducing leakages and ensuring benefits reach the intended recipients.
- Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has made cashless transactions a daily habit even in remote villages, turning roadside tea stalls into part of the formal economy. Digital literacy campaigns have helped women, senior citizens, and marginalized groups step into spaces previously dominated by the privileged few.
- This democratization of access has also altered India's socio-political fabric. Social media platforms have amplified the voices of people from communities historically excluded from mainstream discourse, creating new spaces for debate, dissent, and activism.



# TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN REDEFINING INDIAN SOCIETY

## Economic redefinition :

- The Indian economy has been reimagined through technology. The rise of India's startup ecosystem, now the third-largest in the world, has been fuelled by the convergence of cloud computing, AI, and mobile connectivity. Technology-driven job creation, from gig work to IT services, has altered traditional employment structures. Sectors such as healthcare, education, and agriculture long plagued by inefficiency, are witnessing innovations that improve reach and efficiency, from telemedicine consultations to precision farming.
- Importantly, technology has positioned India as a key player in the global knowledge economy. Indian software engineers, AI researchers, and entrepreneurs are shaping innovations that are as relevant in San Francisco and Singapore as they are in Surat and Siliguri.

## Challenges of Transformation:

- Yet, the picture is not without shadows. As technology redefines society, it also sharpens certain divides. The digital divide, though narrowing, still leaves millions without reliable access to the internet or the skills to use it effectively.
- The algorithmic bias in AI systems risks reinforcing social inequalities. Misinformation, cyber fraud, and online harassment present new challenges for law enforcement and civil society. Privacy concerns loom large, especially as the state and private companies amass unprecedented amounts of personal data.
- Moreover, the nature of work is changing in ways that may deepen economic insecurity. Automation threatens traditional jobs, and the gig economy often lacks the protections and benefits of formal employment.

## Cultural Shifts:

- Technology's role in redefining Indian society is not only material but also deeply cultural. Traditional media consumption has given way to OTT platforms, bringing global entertainment into every home but also sparking debates on cultural homogenization. Dating apps, online gaming, and influencer culture are reshaping notions of relationships, leisure, and even morality.
- The ability to document and share experiences instantly has changed how individuals perceive their lives and the lives of others, sometimes fuelling aspirations and at other times breeding anxiety and discontent.

## The Road Ahead:

- India stands at an inflection point. Technology will continue to be the engine of growth, but its direction depends on governance, ethics, and inclusivity. Policies like the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, the push for indigenous semiconductor manufacturing, and investments in AI research will determine whether the technological future is empowering or extractive.
- The challenge for India is to ensure that technology serves as a bridge rather than a barrier connecting rural to urban, rich to poor, and tradition to modernity. This requires a conscious effort to invest not only in infrastructure but also in digital literacy, ethical safeguards, and equitable access.
- Technology in India is no longer a niche sector; it is the bloodstream of the nation's socio-economic life. Its role in redefining Indian society is both exhilarating and sobering, a reminder that tools alone do not define progress, but the way a society chooses to wield them does.



# TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN REDEFINING INDIAN SOCIETY

## Write up

### INTRODUCTION

India is undergoing a rapid technological transformation. From smartphones to online payments, digital tools now shape daily life for over 954 million internet users, making it the world's second-largest online population. Affordable data and devices have expanded access, fueling economic growth and improving healthcare and education. Yet, challenges like the digital divide, privacy concerns, and cultural changes remain as India balances progress with tradition.

### FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN SOCIETY:

India's traditional society is marked by deep diversity and strong cultural roots.

It is multi-religious, home to Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism, reflecting rich spiritual traditions. It is also multi-lingual, with 22 official languages and hundreds of regional dialects. The caste system continues to influence social relations despite constitutional safeguards, while tribal communities around 705 in number, comprising about 8.6% of the population maintain distinct customs and lifestyles. Family structures have traditionally been joint, though nuclear families are becoming more common in urban areas. Marriage customs remain predominantly arranged, shaped by religion, caste, and regional traditions.

### TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** It includes technologies such as Internet, Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, etc., driven by improved access to high-speed internet, digital infrastructure, and mobile penetration.
- **FinTech (Financial Technology):** It includes increased adoption of mobile banking for financial inclusion, digital payments, digital lending platform, use of Blockchain in banking and record-keeping, etc.
- **E-Governance:** It includes use of Aadhar in provisioning of services to citizens, Citizen Service Portals (e.g., MyGov), land record digitization, etc.

- **MedTech (Medical Technology):** It includes telemedicine and remote consultations (e.g., eSanjeevani initiative of government for online consultation), Electronic Health Record management, use of AI in diagnostics, etc.
- **EdTech (Education Technology):** It includes adoption of Online Learning Platforms (e.g., SWAYAM Platform), digital classrooms and virtual labs, AI-powered personalized learning, etc.

### BALANCING TECHNOLOGY WITH TRADITIONS

1. **Individual Level:** At the individual level, people follow selective adoption of technology, choosing tools that align with their values and beliefs, for example, using social media to connect with family while avoiding conflicting content. Many practice digital detox by setting aside time to disconnect from screens and engage in offline activities like meditation or yoga, through this Traditional skill enhancement is encouraged.
2. **Societal Level:** At the societal level, digital religious practices like online pujas and live-streamed aarti ceremonies help communities connect while preserving rituals. Efforts like cultural preservation through digital archives or libraries, this safeguard folk songs, dance forms, and regional languages, further the promotion of digital literacy.
3. **Government Level:** The government plays a crucial role through schemes like Digital India for Cultural Heritage Preservation, digitizing monuments, manuscripts, and artwork. Initiatives like the PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) upskill artisans in traditional crafts and integrate digital skills.

### KEY CHALLENGES OF TECHNOLOGY IN REDEFINING INDIAN SOCIETY

1. Digital Divide
2. Privacy and Data Security
3. Cybersecurity Threats
4. Misinformation & Radical Echo Chambers
5. Impact on Social Behaviour & Mental Health

### The Way Forward

1. Bridging the Digital Divide:
2. Promoting Ethical Use of Technology
3. Supporting Startups and Innovation Hubs
4. Implementing Smart Governance
5. Promoting Sustainable Technology Practices

### CONCLUSION: TO RISE, STAY ROOTED

Technology is now a central force in India's growth story. It has the potential to connect people, bridge social gaps, and create equal opportunities – but only if it is used responsibly. The challenge is to use this power to build an inclusive, ethical, and sustainable future. By combining modern innovation with cultural traditions, India can create a society that is both forward-looking and deeply rooted in its heritage.



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# JUDICIAL REFORM AND THE IDEAS OF SEPARATION OF POWER



## INTRODUCTION

- India's Constitution is not just a legal document; it is a moral covenant between the state and its citizens. At its heart lies a delicate architecture, the separation of powers designed to ensure that no single arm of government becomes so dominant that it threatens democracy itself.
- The legislature makes the laws, the executive enforces them, and the judiciary interprets them. In theory, this arrangement is a shield against tyranny.
- In practice, however, India's judiciary finds itself at the centre of intense debates on efficiency, transparency, accountability, and overreach. Calls for judicial reform are not new, but in recent years they have acquired an urgency that can no longer be ignored.

### The Constitutional Design

- The framers of the Constitution, inspired by Montesquieu's philosophy and tempered by India's unique socio-political realities, did not insist on a rigid separation of powers like in the United States.
- Instead, they opted for a functional overlap, the executive sits in the legislature, the legislature influences the judiciary through appointments, and the judiciary has powers of judicial review over laws and executive actions.
- This flexibility was meant to ensure cooperation. But over time, it has also led to tensions. Questions arise when the judiciary strikes down laws passed by Parliament, or when the executive delays judicial appointments. The debate often circles back to a simple yet profound question: Where does accountability end, and encroachment begin?

### Why Judicial Reform is Imperative

India's judiciary is among the most respected in the world for its independence and activism, yet it is also plagued by serious structural challenges.

- **Pendency of Cases:** As of 2025, over 4.5 crore cases are pending across various courts. Justice delayed is not just justice denied it is justice abandoned. The sheer volume of arrears erodes public faith in the system.
- **Opaque Appointments:** The collegium system, though designed to protect judicial independence, has often been criticised for lacking transparency and accountability. The striking down of the NJAC (National Judicial Appointments Commission) in 2015 reaffirmed judicial primacy, but it also left unresolved the question of how to make appointments more open without compromising independence.

# JUDICIAL REFORM AND THE IDEAS OF SEPARATION OF POWER

**3. Accessibility:** Legal processes remain intimidating for ordinary citizens. High legal fees, procedural complexity, and linguistic barriers keep justice out of reach for millions.

**4. Technological Backlog:** While e-courts and digitisation efforts have made progress, they remain uneven across states, leaving the system dependent on outdated paper-based methods.

## The Separation of Powers Under Stress

A healthy democracy thrives when each pillar of governance respects the boundaries of the other. However, the lines in India often blur.

- **Judicial Overreach:** Public Interest Litigations (PILs) have expanded the judiciary's role in governance, sometimes for the better (environmental protection, rights of the marginalised) but at other times venturing into policy-making, which is the domain of the legislature and executive.
- **Executive Influence:** Delays in approving judicial appointments or allocating funds for the judiciary can subtly weaken its independence.
- **Legislative Pushback:** Parliament has, at times, sought to limit judicial review through constitutional amendments, creating flashpoints that reach the Supreme Court.

The result is a constant tug-of-war, one that keeps the balance of power alive but also tests the resilience of constitutional norms.

## Global Parallels and Lessons

- Other democracies have grappled with similar challenges. In the United States, judicial appointments are political, but confirmation hearings offer public scrutiny. In the UK, a judicial appointments commission operates independently of both Parliament and the executive.
- The lesson for India is that independence and accountability need not be mutually exclusive; they can be designed to reinforce each other.

## Reform Pathways

Judicial reform is not about weakening the judiciary, it is about making it stronger, more efficient, and more trusted. Possible steps include:

- **Transparent Appointments:** Introducing a balanced judicial appointments body that includes members from the judiciary, executive, and independent institutions, with proceedings open to public oversight.
- **Case Management Systems:** Using AI-driven analytics to prioritise and track cases, ensuring speedy disposal.
- **Grassroots Accessibility:** Strengthening legal aid services, translating court documents into local languages, and expanding mobile courts in rural areas.
- **Performance Audits:** Regular, non-intrusive audits of judicial performance to identify systemic bottlenecks without undermining judicial independence.
- **Technology Integration:** Fully digitising records, enabling hybrid hearings, and integrating data across all court levels.

## The Ethical Imperative

- Judicial reform is not merely an administrative exercise, it is a democratic necessity. The judiciary, unlike the legislature or executive, cannot claim electoral legitimacy. Its authority rests entirely on public trust. That trust is built not just on the quality of judgments, but also on the perception that justice is accessible, impartial, and timely.
- Equally, the doctrine of separation of powers is not a rigid wall but a living principle. The three branches must be able to cooperate without colluding, and to check each other without paralysing governance.



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# **JUDICIAL REFORM AND THE IDEAS OF SEPARATION OF POWER**

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## **The Road Ahead**

- If India is to remain a robust democracy, judicial reform must be approached as part of a broader constitutional housekeeping. The aim is not to tilt the balance of power, but to strengthen the fulcrum on which that balance rests. This requires political will, judicial openness to change, and public engagement.
- The framers of the Constitution understood that no institution is immune to the erosion of time. As Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer once observed, “The judiciary must be dynamic in its response, creative in its approach, and ever-vigilant in its role as guardian of the Constitution.” Reform, therefore, is not an admission of weakness — it is a reaffirmation of strength.
- In the end, judicial reform and the principle of separation of powers are two sides of the same coin: one ensures that the judiciary works better, the other ensures that it works within its rightful space. Together, they safeguard the promise that the Constitution made to every Indian that justice will not only be done, but will be seen to be done.

# JUDICIAL REFORM AND THE IDEAS OF SEPARATION OF POWER

## Write up

### INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of India was based on the principle of democracy, rule of law, checks and balances. The concepts of Judicial Review and Separation of Power are two important doctrines which support the ideals and also are the cornerstone of a constitutional democracy. Both work together to ensure that each branch of government - legislative, executive, and judiciary function within limits. The separation of powers divides the government into distinct branches, each with its own responsibilities, while judicial review empowers the judiciary to assess the actions of the other branches, ensuring they comply with the constitution. These principles form the bedrock of the Indian Constitution, ensuring its supremacy and the protection of citizens' rights. They are not merely theoretical concepts but are actively applied in the Indian context, shaping governance and the relationship between the different organs of the state.

### JUDICIAL REVIEW

Judicial review is the power of courts to assess if laws or government actions align with the constitution. If a law is deemed unconstitutional, the court can invalidate it. This power ensures the government operates within constitutional limits, protecting individual rights and the rule of law. Judicial Review has two main important functions: legitimizing government actions and protection of the constitution against undue encroachment.

### SEPARATION OF POWERS

The separation of powers is a fundamental principle of governance that divides governmental responsibilities among different branches to prevent any single branch from becoming too powerful. This system typically involves three branches: the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary. Each branch has its own specific functions and powers, and they are designed to check and balance each other. According to Article 50 of the Indian Constitution, the State shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive in the public services of the State.

In essence, the separation of powers in India, along with the checks and balances, is designed to create a system of governance where power is distributed, and each branch of government is accountable to the others. This structure protects individual rights and ensures the rule of law, which is vital for a democratic society.

### CONTEMPORARY DEBATES AND CHALLENGES

- **Judicial Activism vs Judicial Overreach:** Judicial activism involves courts proactively intervening in policy, addressing injustices and protecting rights. However, it can lead to overreach, potentially undermining the separation of powers by encroaching on legislative and executive domains. The judiciary must balance its role as a rights protector with respecting the prerogatives of other branches. Overreach risks politicizing the judiciary and creating laws that are not fully vetted, leading to instability and lack of public trust. Striking this balance is crucial for maintaining the judiciary's integrity and effectiveness.
- **The legislative vacuum:** It is characterized by poor debates and hurried laws, also poses a significant challenge. Without robust debate and scrutiny, laws may be passed without thorough consideration of their implications, potentially leading to poorly drafted legislation that is vulnerable to legal challenges. This can increase the burden on the judiciary, which may be forced to interpret and clarify ambiguous laws.

- **Executive dominance:** It poses another significant challenge, particularly concerning the appointment of judges and control over funds. Delays in judicial appointments can lead to a backlog of cases, hindering the delivery of timely justice. The executive's influence in the appointment process can also raise concerns about the independence of the judiciary. Furthermore, control over funds can be used to influence the judiciary, potentially affecting its ability to function independently.

### CONCLUSION: FROM SYMBOLISM TO STRATEGY

In the end, judicial review and the separation of powers are fundamental to the operation of a just and democratic government. They establish a system of checks and balances that prevents the concentration of power, protects individual rights, and ensures that the government operates within the bounds of the constitution. These principles are essential for maintaining the rule of law and preserving the freedoms of citizens.



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# THE FOUNDATION OF

# JOURNAL



# Focus of the month

## QUAD NATIONS UNVEIL 'QUAD AT THE SEA' INITIATIVE TO BOOST INDO- PACIFIC MARITIME SECURITY...

### Introduction

The 'Quad at the Sea observer mission' is a plan launched by the four Quad countries India, US, Japan, and Australia, to work together and strengthen security in the Indo-Pacific Ocean region. This area is very important for global trade and is witnessing growing tensions, especially due to China's aggressive actions at sea. Hence, through this initiative, the Quad countries will share information, improve maritime surveillance, train partner countries' navies, and conduct joint naval exercises. It was launched as part of the Wilmington Declaration (2024), adopted during the 6th Quad Summit (4th in-person Quad Leaders' Summit) held in Delaware, USA. The aim is to keep the seas open, safe, and free for all, based on international rules.

### The Wilmington Declaration

The Wilmington Declaration is a joint statement adopted at the QUAD Leaders' Summit held in Wilmington, USA, in September 2024. It outlines the QUAD's shared vision for a Free, Open, Inclusive, and Rules-Based Indo-Pacific, reaffirming the grouping as a "force for good", highlighting deeper alignment on strategic, security, health, technological, and economic cooperation across the region.

### Why the INDO PACIFIC Matters

#### 1. Economic & Trade Hub

The Indo-Pacific spans the Indian Ocean to the western and central Pacific, home to over 60% of global GDP and more than 50% of world trade. Key maritime chokepoints such as the Strait of Malacca, South China Sea, and Bab-al-Mandeb carry 40% of global oil shipments and over 80% of maritime trade, underpinning global economic stability.

#### 2. Strategic & Geopolitical Importance

The region hosts major powers (India, China, Japan, the US, Australia) and is central to geopolitical competition and balance-of-power dynamics. With rising Chinese influence and maritime assertiveness, especially in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, secure sea lanes are vital for national sovereignty and Indian strategic autonomy, guided by India's SAGAR doctrine and "free and open Indo-Pacific" framework.

#### 3. Resource Richness & Connectivity

The region is rich in fisheries, offshore hydrocarbons, and minerals. e.g., the South China Sea alone holds 11 billion barrels of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of gas.

#### 4. Climate & Non-Traditional Security

The Indo-Pacific is environmentally vulnerable, subject to sea-level rise, cyclones, coral degradation, and crossing illegal fishing and piracy risks. Multilateral frameworks like IORA, IPOI, and climate-resilience initiatives are central to addressing these challenges.

### Objectives

#### 1. Enhance Interoperability and Coordination Among Quad Coast Guards

This mission enables the four countries' coast guards (India, US, Japan, Australia) to operate more efficiently together. Through joint exercises, shared protocols, and cross-training, it builds mutual trust and compatibility in handling maritime operations.

#### 2. Strengthen Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)

MDA involves tracking ship movements, monitoring illegal activities like unregulated fishing or smuggling, and observing naval build-ups in sensitive regions. The Quad aims to create a shared real-time maritime picture, especially for partner countries in the Indian Ocean Region and ASEAN. This is aligned with initiatives like the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), launched in 2022.

#### 3. Improve Operational Readiness

The initiative includes hands-on training, real-sea simulations, and joint protocols to improve readiness in handling both traditional (naval threats) and non-traditional threats (disaster response, smuggling, etc.). The Ship Observer Mission allows officers to observe live operations aboard another country's vessel, improving technical and procedural understanding.

#### 4. Promote a Rules-Based Maritime Order

A key aim is to uphold international laws like the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Quad stands against unilateral maritime claims and activities (especially by China in the South China Sea) that disrupt peace and freedom of navigation. The mission reinforces global maritime norms and supports free, open, and inclusive use of the seas.

#### 5. Boost India's Maritime Diplomacy and SAGAR Vision

For India, this initiative supports key doctrines like SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), IPOI (Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative), and MAHASAGAR. It enhances India's standing as a responsible maritime power that promotes regional peace and builds capacities in smaller island and coastal states.



### Challenges

- **Unclear Strategic Focus:** While the mission serves as a strong political symbol, analysts note a lack of clear strategic objectives and concrete follow-through. Current coordination is largely symbolic and overlaps with existing mechanisms like ReCAAP.
- **Geographic & Operational Gaps:** The Quad-at-Sea initiative primarily covers the Pacific and some parts of the Indian Ocean. Key areas like the western Indian Ocean remain under-monitored, reducing its impact on broader maritime domain awareness.
- **Coordination Complexity Among Agencies:** Quad coast guards operate under different national authorities with varied mandates (e.g. law enforcement vs. SAR vs. environmental monitoring). This diversity complicates integrated responses without a structured coordination mechanism.
- **Resource & Infrastructure Limitations:** Implementation of missions depends on high-end infrastructure such as satellite data fusion, secure communications, skilled tracking systems. Variance in capabilities across participating countries and partner states can limit effective cooperation.

### Path Ahead

- **Expand to Quad-Plus Format:** As CNAS recommends, include maritime agencies from Southeast Asian nations such as Vietnam, South Korea, and ASEAN states without formal Quad membership. This would build trust and broaden security partnerships.
- **Link Regional Fusion Centers:** Enhance the coverage of the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) by connecting India's IFC-IOR with regional centres in Seychelles, Madagascar, and other western Indian Ocean hubs.
- **Institutionalise Quad Coast Guard Meetings:** Regular Quad Coast Guard conferences or working groups can streamline coordination, clarify roles, and reinforce planning for joint exercises and HADR response.

### Conclusion

The 'Quad at the Sea' initiative marks a significant step in reinforcing the shared commitment of India, the US, Japan, and Australia toward a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific. By enhancing maritime domain awareness, operational coordination, and capacity-building of partner nations, it seeks to ensure peace and security in one of the most strategically vital regions of the world. While challenges remain in terms of strategic clarity and operational depth, a cooperative and inclusive approach especially involving regional actors can transform this mission into a long-term pillar of maritime stability. For India, it aligns well with its vision of SAGAR and strengthens its role as a responsible net security provider in the region.



# Focus of the month

## 17TH BRICS SUMMIT IN BRAZIL HIGHLIGHTS INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE AND GLOBAL SOUTH SOLIDARITY

### Introduction

BRICS is a group of five major emerging economies Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Formed to promote cooperation among developing countries. It aims to reform global institutions like the UN and IMF, ensuring fairer representation for the Global South in global decision-making.

The 17th BRICS Summit took place in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil on 6th and 7th July 2025. The theme this year was “**Strengthening Global South Cooperation for a More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance.**” At the end of the summit, the “Rio de Janeiro Declaration” was adopted, representing a strategic shift towards expansion, inclusivity, and strong South-South cooperation. India will assume the BRICS Chairship and host the 18th BRICS Summit in 2026.

### Key Outcomes of the 17th BRICS Summit :

1. **Global Governance Reform:** BRICS backed expansion of the UN Security Council to include more permanent members from Asia, Africa, and Latin America for greater Global South representation, urged IMF and World Bank reforms to reflect Emerging Markets and Developing Countries’ (EMDCs) role, and supported a rules-based WTO.
2. **Sustainable Development:** BRICS adopted the Leaders’ Framework Declaration on Climate Finance to mobilize resources for developing countries and endorsed an MoU on the BRICS Carbon Markets Partnership to enhance cooperation in carbon pricing and emissions trading.
3. **Peace and Security:** BRICS reaffirmed “African Solutions to African Problems”, called for a Gaza ceasefire and two-state solution. BRICS leaders condemned the Pahalgam attack, and India stressed that terrorism must be rejected on principle, not treated as a matter of convenience.
4. **Financial Cooperation:** BRICS advanced talks on a Cross-Border Payments Initiative to reduce US dollar reliance, supported the New Development Bank’s expansion, and the BRICS Multilateral Guarantees (BMG) pilot to de-risk investments.

### BRICS Redefining Power Dynamics in Global Governance

1. **Energy Security:**
  - With Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE joining, BRICS now accounts for around 44% of global crude oil production, positioning it as a key player in ensuring energy security and influencing oil prices and supply chains.
2. **Neutral Space for Strategic Dialogue:**
  - In times of bilateral tensions, such as the India-China Doklam standoff, BRICS offers a neutral, non-Western diplomatic platform for dialogue encouraging constructive engagement.
3. **Instrument for Multilateral Reform:**
  - BRICS provides India and others a collective forum to push for reforms in global institutions like the UN Security Council, WTO, IMF, and World Bank to reflect current global realities.
4. **Inclusivity and Global Engagement:**
  - The inclusion of new countries, many of which are WTO members (except Ethiopia and Iran), shows the group’s effort to expand its global footprint and engage a broader coalition of non-Western nations.
5. **Emerging Political and Economic Bloc:**
  - BRICS is increasingly seen as a counterbalance to the G7 and a rising force in the G20, addressing economic and political issues like inequality and underrepresentation amid declining Western influence



### Key Challenges

- **Lack of Permanent Seat and Secretariat:** BRICS does not have a permanent seat or a dedicated secretariat, which weakens its institutional framework. The absence of a permanent structure makes decision-making processes slower and less streamlined.
- **Geopolitical Contradictions:** BRICS operates on a consensus basis, but its expansion complicates decision-making due to contradictions like UAE and Egypt’s US alliances and Iran’s adversarial stance, risking potential ineffectiveness akin to the NAM and G7.
- **Limited Influence on Global Institutions:** BRICS+ countries hold only 19% voting power in the IBRD, compared to 40% by the G7, limiting BRICS+ influence on global financial policy. The New Development Bank (NDB) lacks sufficient funds to match the World Bank, IMF, or AIIB.

### Way Forward

- **Institutional Reforms:** Establish a permanent BRICS secretariat, expand decision-making with weighted voting on economic matters while keeping consensus for political issues, and formalize new member integration with clear criteria like GDP, and economic stability to maintain strategic focus, and global credibility.
- **Financial Integration:** Promote alternative SWIFT systems, launch a BRICS+ Development Bank 2.0 to expand NDB lending, and establish a BRICS+ Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to reduce trade barriers among members.
- **Geopolitical Cooperation:** Adopt a unified stance on global governance e.g., UNSC reforms, WTO restructuring, strengthen BRICS+ security dialogue on counter-terrorism, and promote conflict resolution through a neutral platform.

### Conclusion

The 17th BRICS Summit reaffirmed the grouping’s growing importance as a voice for the Global South in shaping a more balanced, inclusive, and multipolar world order. With key discussions on global governance, sustainable development, and emerging technologies. BRICS continues to push for fairer international systems. As India takes over the Chairship for 2026, there is strong momentum to strengthen South-South cooperation and lead meaningful global reforms.



# Focus of the month

## PM MODI'S GHANA VISIT STRENGTHEN TIES WITH AFRICA AND GLOBAL SOUTH

### Introduction

- In July 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook a major five-nation diplomatic tour covering Ghana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia, aimed at deepening India's engagement with the Global South.
- His visit began in Ghana on July 2, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in over 30 years. PM Modi was warmly received with a 21-gun salute and traditional ceremony in Accra, where he held high-level talks with Ghanaian President John Mahama. Both leaders agreed to elevate their bilateral ties to a Comprehensive Partnership, focusing on trade, health, education, and cultural cooperation, and signed four key MoUs to strengthen development partnerships.
- The visit highlighted India's commitment to building stronger ties with Africa and amplifying the voice of the Global South in international affairs.

### Key Outcomes

1. **Strengthening Bilateral Ties:** India and Ghana decided to upgrade their relationship to a Comprehensive Partnership, showing a stronger commitment to work together in areas like trade, health, education, and governance.
2. **Important Agreements (MoUs) Signed:** Four significant Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed:
  - **Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP):** To deepen cultural ties through art, music, dance, literature, and heritage.
  - **Standards & Certification:** Between the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Ghana Standards Authority (GSA) to improve cooperation in setting and following quality standards.
  - **Traditional Medicine Collaboration:** Between Ghana's Institute of Traditional and Alternative Medicine (ITAM) and India's Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA) to promote joint work in education, training, and research in traditional medicine.
  - **Joint Commission Meeting (JCM):** To set up a regular, structured dialogue to monitor and guide bilateral cooperation.
3. **Economic and Trade Boost:** India aims to double bilateral trade in the next five years. Indian investments in Ghana already exceed USD 2 billion, supporting over 900 projects. India extended concessional credit lines worth over USD 450 million for Ghanaian infrastructure, including railways, sugar plants, and power projects.
4. **Defence and Security Cooperation:** Both countries agreed to enhance cooperation in areas like defence training, cyber security, and maritime security. They also committed to working together on counter-terrorism efforts, seeing terrorism as a shared threat.
5. **Technology and Digital Infrastructure Support:** India offered to help Ghana develop its Digital Public Infrastructure, especially by sharing experiences from systems like UPI (Unified Payments Interface), which could help boost Ghana's digital economy.

### Significance of Ghana for India

1. **Gateway to West Africa:** Ghana is considered a political and economic gateway to West Africa, the democratic stability makes Ghana an ideal partner for India's African engagement strategy. Its geographic location and regional influence allow India to deepen its engagement with ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States).
2. **Economic Cooperation:** India's engagement with Ghana supports its economic diplomacy goals in Africa, ensuring access to critical raw materials like gold, bauxite, and cocoa.
3. **Strategic and Security Cooperation:** Ghana lies on the Gulf of Guinea, a region significant for India's maritime security, energy shipping routes, and anti-piracy operations. Partnering with Ghana on defence cooperation offers opportunities to expand its defence exports and security partnerships in Africa.
4. **Diaspora and Cultural Linkages:** A sizable Indian-origin community contributes to Ghana's economy, especially in commerce and industry. Cultural exchange, yoga, Indian Cinema, and education create strong people-to-people ties, reinforcing India's image as a benevolent and inclusive global power.



### Challenges in India-Ghana / Africa Relations

- **Low Follow-Up on High-Level Engagements:** The last India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) was held in 2015. Since then, there has been no new summit, leading to limited political engagement and dialogue, which weakens long-term cooperation.
- **Slow Implementation of Projects:** Although India has extended Lines of Credit (LoCs) and announced development projects, many face delays in execution and fund disbursement, affecting trust and credibility.
- **Governance and Security Instability in Africa:** Frequent coups, terrorism, and political unrest in parts of Africa (like the Sahel region) create challenges for sustainable Indian investments and partnerships.

### Way Forward

1. **Reinvigorate High-Level Dialogue:** India should revive the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) last held in 2015 to restore political momentum and structured engagement with the continent. Holding IAFS-IV in Addis Ababa, the seat of the African Union, can enable stronger multilateral alignment. Additionally, setting up an AU office in New Delhi would promote ongoing dialogue and coordination.
2. **Diversify Economic Engagement:** Focus trade and investment on key sectors like renewable energy, pharma, healthcare, agro-processing, and critical minerals. This aligns with Africa's development priorities and India's energy and industrial needs.
3. **Expand Digital & Capacity-Building Cooperation:** Launch next-phase projects built on India's existing Pan-African e-Network, and expand programs like ITEC/e-ITEC or establish digital public infrastructure pilot projects (e.g. UPI-based payments, digital IDs) tailored to African nations like Kenya or Rwanda.

### Conclusion

India's renewed engagement with Ghana and other African nations underlines its long-standing commitment to South-South cooperation, inclusive development, and shared global leadership. Prime Minister Modi's recent visit not only reaffirmed historical ties but also opened new avenues in trade, culture, digital infrastructure, health, and strategic dialogue. As both sides work towards a Comprehensive Partnership, there is immense scope to deepen mutual trust and cooperation. By focusing on shared challenges and people-centric development, India and Africa can together shape a more equitable and multipolar world order.



# Focus of the month

## WOMEN MSMEs STILL STRUGGLING FOR CREDIT DESPITE SCHEMES

### Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the silent engines of India's economy, contributing nearly 30% to GDP, 45% to manufacturing output, and almost half of the nation's exports. Among them, women-led MSMEs hold enormous potential to drive inclusive growth, create rural employment, and reduce the gender gap in entrepreneurship.

Yet, despite flagship initiatives like Stand-Up India, PM MUDRA Yojana, and the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE), access to formal credit for women entrepreneurs remains stubbornly low. A persistent credit drought continues to limit their scale, competitiveness, and contribution to the economy.

### The Promise of Women-led MSMEs

Women-owned MSMEs account for about one-fifth of all registered enterprises in India, employing over 27 million people, many of them in rural and semi-urban areas. These enterprises dominate in sectors such as textiles, handicrafts, food processing, healthcare, and digital services. Beyond profits, they reinvest earnings into education, healthcare, and community development, creating a multiplier effect on social welfare. Global studies suggest that if women-owned MSMEs in India had equal access to finance, the nation's GDP could increase by as much as USD 770 billion by 2025. However, this promise is being stifled by systemic barriers.

### Persistent Barriers to Credit Access

Despite years of policy focus, women entrepreneurs face hurdles that keep them away from formal financing channels:

- **Collateral Limitations** – Only a small fraction of women own property or land in their names, restricting eligibility for secured loans.
- **Gender Bias in Lending** – Deep-seated stereotypes about women entrepreneurs being "riskier" borrowers persist in some banking circles.
- **Low Financial Literacy** – Many women entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas, lack familiarity with complex banking processes.
- **Digital Divide** – Limited smartphone access and internet connectivity hinder participation in digital loan application systems.
- **Scheme Implementation Gaps** – Lengthy documentation, lack of awareness, and inconsistent bank cooperation delay or deny credit access.

### Government Schemes and Their Reach

The government has launched multiple targeted schemes:

- **Stand-Up India** provides loans between ₹10 lakh and ₹1 crore for women and SC/ST entrepreneurs starting new ventures.
- **PM MUDRA Yojana** offers collateral-free loans up to ₹10 lakh under three categories—Shishu, Kishore, and Tarun.
- **CGTMSE** guarantees loans up to ₹2 crore without collateral.
- **Mahila Coir Yojana** promotes women's participation in coir-based industries through training and subsidised equipment.
- **Mahila e-Haat** provides a digital platform to market women entrepreneurs' products.

While these initiatives have brought some progress, ground-level delivery has been inconsistent, leaving many women entrepreneurs still dependent on informal lending.



### Why the Credit Gap Matters

The lack of credit for women-led MSMEs is not just a gender issue—it's an economic one. Reduced access to finance leads to underutilisation of business capacity, fewer job opportunities in rural areas, slower technology adoption, and limited participation in export markets. The result is a weaker contribution to national growth from a segment with significant untapped potential.

### Way Forward: Strengthening the Ecosystem

Closing the credit gap for women MSMEs requires structural changes:

1. **Cash-Flow Based Lending** – Move away from collateral-heavy models and adopt lending criteria based on business cash flows and digital payment records.
2. **Expand Collateral-Free Financing** – Increase coverage under CGTMSE and lower guarantee fees for women-led enterprises.
3. **Boost Digital Financial Inclusion** – Launch mobile-based loan applications in regional languages and conduct digital literacy workshops in partnership with Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
4. **Accountability for Banks** – Set annual targets for women MSME lending and make performance data public.
5. **Grassroots Awareness Campaigns** – Organise district-level "credit melas" exclusively for women entrepreneurs, linking them directly with lenders.

### Conclusion

Women-led MSMEs are not just small businesses—they are pillars of economic and social transformation. Addressing their credit challenges is not a matter of charity but of economic strategy. With targeted reforms, simplified processes, and genuine commitment from financial institutions, India can unlock a powerful wave of women-driven growth that fuels GDP, generates employment, and builds resilient communities.



# Focus of the month

## UNCTAD'S 'WORLD OF DEBT REPORT 2025' AND THE RISING GLOBAL DEBT BURDEN

### Introduction

UNCTAD's World of Debt Report 2025 reveals that global public debt has reached an unprecedented US \$102 trillion in 2024, marking a sharp increase from the previous year. Alarmingly, although developing nations account for less than one-third of this total (approximately US \$31 trillion), their debt has surged at double the pace of advanced economies since 2010. The growing cost of servicing this debt is debilitating as developing countries spent a record US \$921 billion on interest alone in 2024, with 61 countries allocating over 10% of their revenues to interest payments, thereby curtailing critical investments in sectors like health and education.

### Key Highlights of the Report

#### 1. Rapid Increase in Public Debt:

- Institute of International Finance (a global association of financial institutions) has estimated that global debt (including borrowings of households, businesses and governments) has reached USD 315 trillion in 2024, which is 3 times the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Global public debt is rising rapidly, due to a combination of recent crises (such as Covid-19, rising food and energy prices, climate change, etc.) and a sluggish global economy (slowing growth of economy, rising bank interest rates etc). Net interest payments on public debt reached USD 847 billion in 2023 in developing countries, a 26% increase compared to 2021.

#### 2. Regional Disparity in Debt Growth:

- Public debt in developing countries is rising at twice the rate of that in developed countries. It reached USD 29 trillion (30% of the global total) in 2023, increasing from 16% in 2010. Africa's debt burden is growing faster than its economy leading to a rise in the debt-to-GDP ratio. The number of African countries with debt-to-GDP ratios above 60% has increased from 6 to 27 between 2013 and 2023. This is due to unforeseen global issues impacting their expansion and reduced domestic income as a result of a slow economy.

#### 3. Rising Cost of External Debt:

- 50% of developing countries spent at least 6.5% of export revenues on servicing this debt. Since 2020, developing countries have borrowed at 2 to 4 times the interest rates of the United States, inflating repayment costs and limiting resources for development.

#### 4. Negative Net Resource Transfers:

- In 2023, developing countries experienced a net outflow of \$25 billion, paying more in debt servicing than they received in new external disbursements.

### Impact of the Rising Global Debt Burden

- Debt servicing crowding out public spending:** According to UNCTAD's World of Debt Report 2025, net interest payments by developing countries reached US \$921 billion in 2024, a 10% increase from 2023. This escalation diverts substantial fiscal resources from productive sectors into debt repayment.

- Debt burden undermining basic services:** In 61 developing countries, interest payments consumed more than 10% of total government revenues, reducing fiscal space for public investment in infrastructure, welfare, and economic diversification.

- Billions affected by skewed priorities:** An estimated 3.4 billion people live in nations where governments spend more on interest payments than on healthcare or education, leading to underfunded social programmes and widening development gaps.

- Prolonged net outflows:** Many developing nations remain trapped in a cycle of repayment, with net outflows of debt capital. In 2023, these countries collectively paid US \$25 billion more in servicing costs than they received in new loans, exacerbating liquidity shortages and stalling economic growth.



### Way Forward

#### 1. Reform the International Financial

**Architecture:** Make the system more inclusive and development-oriented by improving the real and effective participation of developing countries in the governance of the international financial architecture.

- Enhance Crisis Liquidity Access:** Strengthen the availability of liquidity in times of crisis through strengthened use of Special Drawing Rights, temporary suspension of IMF surcharges, greater access to IMF emergency financing windows linked to countries' quotas, and increased use of regional financial arrangements and South-South regional financial cooperation.
- Establish an Effective Debt Workout Mechanism:** Create an effective debt workout mechanism that addresses current deficiencies of the G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatment, caused by limited country eligibility, creditor coordination challenges, weak mechanisms to stimulate or enforce private creditors' participation, and the lack of automatic debt service suspension clauses.
- Shift Aid Composition Toward Grants over Loans:** The report highlights the need to reverse the trend where aid is increasingly shifting away from grants to concessional loans, exacerbating debt burdens on developing countries.

### Conclusion

UNCTAD's World of Debt Report 2025 underscores a stark reality, as global public debt surpasses US \$102 trillion, its crushing burden falls disproportionately on developing nations. Many of these countries now spend more on interest payments than on health, education, or development, forcing a devastating trade-off between debt servicing and human progress. Some of the urgent and systemic reforms, such as equitable access to finance, inclusive global governance, and robust debt restructuring mechanisms, promotes sustainable development.



# Focus of the month

## NISAR SATELLITE: INDIA AND USA JOIN FORCES TO EXPLORE EARTH LIKE NEVER BEFORE

### Introduction

Space exploration has always been a field where international teamwork brings remarkable breakthroughs. The **NISAR satellite** is a shining example of this, marking the first joint satellite mission between India's ISRO and the USA's NASA. Together, they are developing a powerful Earth observation satellite that promises to revolutionize how we monitor natural disasters, track climate change, and understand the planet's ecosystems.

Scheduled for launch soon, NISAR is much more than just another satellite. It's a symbol of scientific partnership between two space giants, combining their strengths to deliver precise and timely information about the Earth's surface. This collaboration is expected to make significant contributions to disaster management, environmental conservation, and sustainable development worldwide.

### What is NISAR?

NISAR stands for NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar. Unlike regular satellites that rely on sunlight and clear skies to capture images, NISAR uses radar technology that can "see" through clouds, rain, and darkness. This means it can provide detailed images of the Earth's surface at any time, regardless of weather conditions.

The satellite carries two advanced radar instruments:

- An **L-band radar** built by ISRO, which can penetrate dense forests and soil layers.
- An **S-band radar** developed by NASA, which adds complementary information to help detect surface changes more accurately.

By combining these two radars, NISAR will produce high-resolution images that help scientists study the Earth in ways never possible before.

### Key Objectives and Scientific Goals

The main goal of the NISAR mission is to improve our understanding of Earth's dynamic processes. Some of its key aims include:

- **Tracking Natural Disasters:** NISAR will measure tiny movements of the Earth's surface caused by earthquakes, landslides, and volcanic eruptions. This can improve early warning systems and help save lives.
- **Studying Forests and Ecosystems:** By monitoring changes in forests and wetlands, the satellite will provide valuable data on deforestation, habitat loss, and carbon storage.
- **Monitoring Ice Sheets:** Observing glaciers and polar ice helps scientists understand melting patterns and predict sea-level rise.
- **Helping Agriculture:** Soil moisture levels detected by NISAR will assist farmers and water managers in making better decisions to improve crop yields.
- **Urban and Infrastructure Safety:** The satellite can detect ground shifts that threaten buildings, roads, and bridges, helping engineers plan safer cities.

### The Importance of Indo-US collaboration

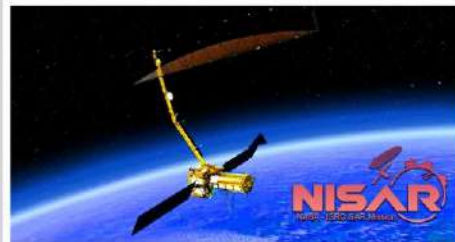
NISAR is a great example of how countries can work together to tackle global challenges. NASA brings decades of experience in radar technology and space science, while ISRO contributes its expertise in building reliable, cost-effective satellites and launching them efficiently.

This partnership benefits both agencies and the global community. It reduces costs, shares knowledge, and speeds up innovation. It also strengthens the relationship between India and the United States in the field of space research, opening doors for future joint projects.

### How Does NISAR Work?

NISAR uses Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), a technology that combines multiple radar signals over time to create highly detailed images. Because radar waves can pass through clouds and darkness, NISAR can capture images of Earth's surface in all weather conditions and at any time of day.

The satellite weighs about 2,800 kg and will orbit the Earth every 12 days, scanning large areas with its dual-frequency radars. This frequent coverage means scientists get regular updates on changes happening on the ground, making it easier to monitor fast-moving events like floods or earthquakes.



### Expected Impact and Applications

The data collected by NISAR will be shared openly with researchers, governments, and organizations worldwide. This will enable better decision-making in disaster response, environmental protection, and sustainable planning.

For example:

- Disaster response teams can use near real-time data to prepare for earthquakes or landslides.
- Environmental scientists can track how forests are changing and assess the impact of climate change.
- Farmers can better manage irrigation and soil health.
- City planners can monitor infrastructure stability and prevent damage from ground movements.

### Looking Ahead: Beyond NISAR

As NISAR prepares to launch, it sets a new standard for international space cooperation and Earth observation technology. The knowledge gained from this mission will not only help address today's challenges but also inspire future collaborations and innovations.

For India, NISAR strengthens ISRO's reputation as a world leader in space technology. For the world, it means better tools to understand and protect our planet. This mission highlights how space science can bring countries together to solve global problems and create a safer, more sustainable future for everyone.



# Focus of the month

## VICE PRESIDENT JAGDEEP DHANKHAR'S MID-TERM RESIGNATION: A TURNING POINT IN INDIAN GOVERNANCE

### Introduction

In a rare and significant development in India's political history, **Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned before completing his full five-year term, citing health reasons as the primary cause.** This unexpected announcement has drawn widespread attention, marking a unique moment in the functioning of one of the country's highest constitutional offices.

The Vice President is India's second-highest constitutional authority, serving as the Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament) and standing next in line to assume the President's office if needed. Dhankhar's decision to step down underscores the intense demands of such a role and highlights the importance of prioritizing health while serving the nation.

### A Distinguished Career Marked by Integrity and Leadership

**Jagdeep Dhankhar took office as India's 14th Vice President in August 2022, bringing with him decades of legal expertise and political experience.** Before this, he served as the Governor of West Bengal from 2019 to 2022, a tenure noted for his proactive engagement in state affairs and vocal, principled stands on governance issues.

Throughout his career, Dhankhar earned a reputation for forthright communication and dedication to democratic values. As Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, he was respected across party lines for maintaining parliamentary decorum and facilitating smooth legislative functioning, even during heated debates. His efforts gave new stature and vitality to the Vice President's office, making it a true pillar of India's democracy.

### The Rigors of Public Office and the Importance of Health

The Vice President's responsibilities are demanding, requiring constant engagement in parliamentary affairs, extensive travel, and representation of India on various national and international platforms. These duties place significant physical and mental strain on the officeholder.

Dhankhar's resignation, prompted by health concerns, highlights the human cost behind leadership roles. Although details of his health remain private, his choice reflects responsible leadership — ensuring the office is held by someone capable of fully meeting its demands. His decision sends a powerful message about balancing public service with personal well-being.

### Constitutional Procedures and Political Consequences

Following Dhankhar's resignation, India's Constitution mandates a by-election for the Vice President's position within six months. This election is anticipated to be a crucial political event, with major parties poised to nominate candidates capable of upholding the impartiality and authority the office requires.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha or senior parliamentary members will temporarily preside over the Upper House, ensuring continuity in legislative business.

Beyond parliamentary duties, the Vice President holds constitutional importance as the immediate successor to the President, adding weight to this transition and the upcoming election.

THE TIMES



**Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar resigns from his office**

### Respect and Recognition from Across the Political Spectrum

Dhankhar's resignation was met with respect and well-wishes from leaders nationwide. His tenure is remembered for strengthening the dignity of the Vice President's office and his unwavering commitment to constitutional values and democratic processes.

Lawmakers appreciated his firm yet fair handling of parliamentary affairs and his efforts to foster respectful discourse in a politically polarized environment. Dhankhar's principled leadership left a lasting positive impact on India's democracy.

### Looking Ahead: Renewal and Reflection in Leadership

The vacancy created by this resignation provides an opportunity to reflect on the demands placed on India's public servants. The upcoming Vice Presidential election will focus on selecting a leader with the resilience, fairness, and diplomatic skills to guide the Rajya Sabha and uphold constitutional principles.

This period also encourages a broader conversation on supporting the health and welfare of leaders, recognizing that their well-being is vital to effective governance.

### Conclusion:

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's mid-term resignation marks a defining moment in India's political landscape. His distinguished career exemplifies integrity, dedication, and courage. By prioritizing his health, Dhankhar has demonstrated responsibility and respect for the high office he served.

As India prepares to elect a new Vice President, the focus remains on maintaining constitutional stability, parliamentary effectiveness, and democratic strength — principles Dhankhar steadfastly championed.

This transition reminds us that behind every high office is a person whose well-being is essential to the nation's progress, underscoring the human side of leadership in a thriving democracy.





# Focus of the month

## AGRA – INDIA'S FIRST WASTE MANAGEMENT CITY: FROM HERITAGE MARVEL TO ZERO-WASTE CHAMPION

### Introduction

Agra, globally renowned for the Taj Mahal—an enduring symbol of India's rich cultural heritage—attracts millions of visitors annually. However, rapid urbanization has brought challenges, particularly in managing increasing solid waste and pollution, which threaten both public health and the preservation of its historic monuments.

In 2023, Agra launched the **Municipal Solid Waste Management and Zero-Waste City Project**, supported by national initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban Phase II) and the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). This project makes Agra the first city in India to implement an integrated waste management system, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development that protects both heritage and environment.

### When Waste Became a Threat to Heritage and Health

Agra generates around 500 to 600 metric tonnes of waste daily, much of which previously ended up in the overflowing Kuberpur landfill. This caused serious environmental problems:

- **Air Pollution:** Decomposing waste emitted methane and foul odours, impacting health and tourism.
- **Water Contamination:** Toxic leachate polluted the Yamuna River, harming aquatic life.
- **Heritage Damage:** Airborne pollutants accelerated damage to the Taj Mahal's marble façade.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) and Supreme Court mandated urgent reforms, enforcing the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, emphasizing segregation and treatment.

### The Zero-Waste Blueprint: How Agra is Turning the Tide

Agra's project implements strategies aligned with national policies:

- **Segregation at Source (Swachh Bharat Mission):** A two-bin system—green for biodegradable, blue for recyclables—is compulsory city-wide. Non-compliance invites fines. Awareness campaigns engage citizens actively.
- **Composting & Biogas Plants (National Bio-Energy Mission):** Each ward hosts Micro Composting Centres (MCCs) that turn organic waste into compost for parks and farms. Bio-methanation units convert wet waste into biogas powering streetlights and kitchens.
- **Waste-to-Energy Plant (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy):** A 15 MW facility processes 1,000 metric tonnes of non-recyclable waste daily, cutting landfill use and emissions.
- **Plastic Recycling (Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016):** Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) sort plastic waste. Through partnership with the Central Road Research Institute (CRRRI), recycled plastic is used in road construction.
- **Smart Technology (Digital India Initiative):** GPS trackers optimize garbage truck routes. The Agra Waste App lets citizens report problems and track collections.

### Protecting Heritage: Cleanliness Meets Conservation

Heritage protection is central:

- **Dust-free, high-density polyethylene bins** near Taj Mahal and Agra Fort reduce litter.
- **Green buffer zones** filter pollutants around monuments.
- **Regular air and water quality monitoring** is conducted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).



### Community Power: Citizens Driving Change

Success depends on people:

- School Eco-Clubs promote segregation and recycling.
- NGOs like CURE India train informal waste pickers in safe recycling, improving livelihoods.
- Hotels adopt zero-food-waste kitchens under Sustainable Hospitality Guidelines.

### Challenges on the Path to Zero-Waste

Challenges remain:

- Changing public habits requires ongoing education.
- Tourist seasons cause waste surges needing flexible management.
- Sustainable funding is crucial for infrastructure upkeep.

### The Road Ahead: Scaling Agra's Success Nationwide

To become a national model, Agra must:

1. Enforce Solid Waste Management Rules strictly.
2. Expand ward-level composting and biogas plants.
3. Support private recycling startups via schemes like the Waste to Wealth Mission.
4. Sustain citizen engagement through awareness and digital platforms.

Heritage cities like Jaipur, Mysuru, and Varanasi watch closely to replicate this model.

### Conclusion

Agra's journey shows heritage preservation and sustainability go hand in hand. Aligned with national missions like Swachh Bharat, National Bio-Energy Mission, and Digital India, the city protects its monuments and leads urban environmental innovation.

In the Taj Mahal's shadow, Agra creates a legacy of cleanliness, conservation, and citizen empowerment a shining example for India and beyond.



# Focus of the month

## SUPREME COURT TO HEAR PRESIDENTIAL REFERENCE: STRENGTHENING INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

### Introduction

In India's democratic system, the President holds a unique constitutional power under **Article 143** of the Constitution to seek the Supreme Court's advisory opinion on important questions of law or fact. Known as a **Presidential Reference**, this mechanism allows the President to refer complex and significant legal issues to the Supreme Court for guidance. While such references are relatively rare, they play a crucial role in clarifying constitutional doubts and guiding governance in the country.

Though the Supreme Court's opinion in these matters is advisory and not binding, it carries substantial authority and influence. The Court's guidance helps maintain the delicate balance between India's key institutions — the executive, legislature, and judiciary — ensuring that their actions remain within constitutional limits.

### Supreme Court as the Interpreter of the Constitution

When the Supreme Court receives a Presidential Reference, it undertakes a detailed and careful examination of the questions presented. These questions often involve intricate constitutional issues such as:

- The scope and limits of executive power
- Interpretation and protection of fundamental rights
- Issues relating to federalism and the relationship between the Centre and states
- The validity and constitutionality of laws and amendments

The advisory opinion delivered by the Supreme Court serves as an authoritative guide to prevent constitutional conflicts and uphold the rule of law.

### Historical Significance of Presidential References

Though infrequent, Presidential References have been instrumental in shaping Indian constitutional law. Some notable examples include:

- Clarifying the President's pardoning power during the 1970s, which established important precedents on mercy petitions and executive clemency.
- Providing guidance on the appointment and transfer of judges, reinforcing the independence of the judiciary and defining the roles of different constitutional bodies.
- Advising on the validity of constitutional amendments and legislative measures, helping safeguard the Constitution's integrity against potential misuse.

These references have helped resolve critical legal issues, thereby strengthening the democratic fabric of the nation.

### The Current Presidential Reference and Its Importance

The present Presidential Reference being heard by the Supreme Court involves constitutional questions of great significance, highlighting the need for judicial clarity in governance and legal interpretation. While the specific questions vary depending on the issue referred, Presidential References generally address matters that affect citizens' rights, governance processes, or the separation of powers.

By seeking the Court's opinion, the President ensures that these complex issues are addressed transparently and authoritatively, fostering trust in India's constitutional system and reinforcing the rule of law.



### Checks and Balances: Safeguarding Democracy

The process of Presidential References underscores India's commitment to the system of checks and balances among its institutions:

- Before making a reference, the President consults the Council of Ministers, ensuring collective responsibility and political accountability.
- The Supreme Court provides an impartial and independent advisory opinion that guides the executive and legislature on constitutional compliance.
- This mechanism prevents potential clashes between branches of government by offering a peaceful and constitutional means to resolve disputes.

Such constitutional dialogue preserves the equilibrium essential for stable and effective governance.

### Upholding Constitutional Morality and Accountability

The Supreme Court's advisory role through Presidential References reinforces its position as the guardian of the Constitution. It promotes:

- Transparency and accountability in public administration
- Respect for constitutional morality in exercising power
- Cooperation and institutional harmony between the judiciary and the executive

This process helps India's democracy grow stronger by ensuring that governance aligns with constitutional values and the rights of its citizens.

### Conclusion: Strengthening Democracy Through Judicial Guidance

The Supreme Court's decision to hear and provide an advisory opinion on the Presidential Reference marks a significant moment in India's constitutional journey. It reflects the maturity and robustness of the country's democratic institutions, where the judiciary acts not just as an adjudicator but also as an essential counselor to the executive.

As India awaits the Court's opinion, this process reaffirms the enduring strength of the Constitution — the foundation for justice, liberty, and democratic governance. The collaboration between the President and the Supreme Court through Article 143 exemplifies the synergy necessary for a balanced and just democracy.



# Focus of the month

## IMPEACHMENT OF JUDGES IN INDIA: UPHOLDING JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY

### Introduction

In any democratic setup, an independent and impartial judiciary is essential to safeguard the rule of law and protect citizens' rights. However, judicial accountability is equally important to maintain public trust in the justice system. The impeachment of judges in India is a constitutional mechanism designed to hold judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts accountable for proven misconduct or incapacity.

This process ensures that judges maintain the highest standards of integrity, fairness, and professionalism, reinforcing the judiciary's credibility and the overall health of democracy.

### Constitutional Provisions Governing Impeachment

The impeachment of judges is governed primarily by **Article 124(4)** and **Article 217(1)(b)** of the Constitution of India. These provisions apply to judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts respectively and outline the grounds and procedures for removal from office.

A judge can be removed only on proven grounds of:

- "Proved misbehavior"
- Incapacity

The Constitution thus protects judges from arbitrary removal, ensuring judicial independence while allowing removal for serious wrongdoing.

### The Impeachment Procedure: A Detailed Process

The process of impeaching a judge is rigorous and deliberately challenging, reflecting the importance of protecting judicial independence while ensuring accountability. The key steps are:

#### 1. Initiation of Motion:

- A motion for removal can be introduced in either House of Parliament by at least 100 members of the Lok Sabha or 50 members of the Rajya Sabha.

#### 2. Investigation Committee:

- Once admitted, the motion is investigated by a committee consisting of a Supreme Court judge, a High Court chief justice, and an eminent jurist to examine the allegations.

#### 3. Parliamentary Approval:

- If the committee finds the judge guilty, the motion is taken up for debate in both Houses of Parliament.
- To pass, the motion requires a special majority: a majority of the total membership of each House, and a majority of not less than two-thirds of members present and voting.

#### 4. President's Order:

- After the motion is passed by both Houses, the President of India orders the removal of the judge from office.

This thorough process ensures that removal happens only after careful scrutiny and consensus, protecting judicial independence while enabling accountability.

### Historical Context: Judges Who Faced Impeachment Proceedings

Though impeachment provisions have existed since the adoption of the Constitution, actual impeachment attempts have been exceedingly rare. The notable instance was the 1993 attempt to impeach Justice V. Ramaswami, a Supreme Court judge accused of corruption and misconduct.

- The impeachment motion was introduced but failed to secure the required majority in Parliament.
- This case remains significant as the only serious impeachment attempt against a Supreme Court judge in independent India.

The rarity of impeachment reflects the high standards expected from judges and the gravity of the process.



### Challenges and Criticisms of the Impeachment Process

The impeachment process, while vital, faces several challenges:

- The high threshold for initiating and passing the motion makes removal extremely difficult, which some argue may shield errant judges.
- The procedure is politically sensitive, as Parliament members may be reluctant to take strong action against judges.
- The lack of transparency and clear criteria for "proven misbehavior" has been criticized for causing ambiguity.

These challenges have prompted discussions about reforming the process to strengthen judicial accountability without compromising independence.

### Measures to Enhance Judicial Accountability

To address these concerns, various reforms have been suggested:

- Establishment of a National Judicial Accountability Commission to investigate complaints against judges (though previous attempts faced constitutional hurdles).
- Improving transparency in judicial appointments and conduct through greater public scrutiny.
- Encouraging the judiciary to self-regulate through ethical codes and disciplinary mechanisms within judicial bodies.

Balancing accountability with judicial independence remains a key objective in these reform efforts.

### Conclusion

The impeachment of judges is a vital constitutional safeguard ensuring that India's judiciary remains independent, fair, and accountable. While the process is intentionally stringent to protect judges from undue political interference, it also holds them to high standards of conduct essential for maintaining public confidence in the justice system. Strengthening this mechanism, along with other accountability measures, is crucial for preserving the rule of law and democratic values in India. Vigilant oversight of the judiciary ensures that justice not only is done but is seen to be done, cementing the judiciary's role as a pillar of democracy.



# Focus of the month

## PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI'S VISIT TO MALDIVES: STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC TIES AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

### Introduction

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the Maldives reaffirmed the deep-rooted friendship between India and the island nation, highlighting India's steadfast commitment to regional peace, security, and sustainable development in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The Maldives, strategically located along vital maritime routes, plays a crucial role in India's regional security calculus. Modi's visit focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors including security, infrastructure, climate resilience, and people-to-people ties.

This diplomatic engagement underlines India's proactive approach to strengthening its "Neighborhood First" policy and its vision for a stable, prosperous Indian Ocean through collaboration and mutual respect.

### Key Agreements and Strategic Cooperation

Several important initiatives and agreements were announced during the visit, reflecting a comprehensive approach to deepen partnership:

- **Maritime Security and Defence Cooperation:** India reiterated its position as the Maldives' primary security partner, pledging to boost joint maritime patrols, intelligence sharing, and training for the Maldives Coast Guard. These efforts are designed to counter emerging threats such as piracy, terrorism, and illegal trafficking in the strategically sensitive region.
- **Economic Assistance and Infrastructure Development:** India committed to expanding financial support and infrastructure projects, including affordable housing, healthcare facilities, and digital connectivity enhancements. A significant line of credit was extended to assist Maldives in post-pandemic economic recovery and sustainable growth.
- **Connectivity and Transport:** Plans to enhance air and sea connectivity between India and Maldives aim to facilitate smoother trade, tourism, and cultural exchange, thereby strengthening people-to-people relations.
- **Environmental Cooperation and Climate Action:** Recognizing the Maldives' vulnerability to climate change and rising sea levels, both nations pledged collaboration on renewable energy projects, disaster management, and sustainable development initiatives.

### Significance of the Visit in the Regional Geopolitical Landscape

- The Maldives' strategic location makes it a vital partner in India's efforts to secure critical maritime routes in the Indian Ocean.
- Modi's visit strengthens India's "Neighborhood First" policy and "SAGAR" vision, promoting a free, open, and inclusive maritime domain.
- The visit demonstrates India's commitment to counterbalance the growing influence of other major powers in the region.
- Enhanced maritime security cooperation helps protect sea lanes critical for global commerce and energy supplies.
- It reinforces India's role as the principal security provider and trusted development partner in the Indian Ocean region.
- The partnership fosters regional solidarity based on collaboration, climate resilience, and sustainable growth.

### Historical Context of India-Maldives Relations

The bilateral relationship between India and Maldives has been historically warm and multi-faceted:

- India played a pivotal role during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami by providing critical humanitarian aid and reconstruction assistance.
- In 1988, India intervened militarily to restore democracy in Maldives during a coup attempt, cementing its position as a security guarantor.
- Over the years, India has consistently supported Maldives through development aid, health services, education programs, and infrastructure projects.

Modi's recent visit builds on this longstanding foundation of friendship, marking a renewed phase of partnership that is attuned to contemporary challenges and opportunities.



### Future Prospects for Cooperation

The visit opened avenues for collaboration in several key emerging sectors:

- **Digital and Technological Advancements:** India's expertise in digital infrastructure will aid Maldives' digital transformation and e-governance initiatives.
- **Tourism and Cultural Exchange:** Enhanced connectivity will boost tourism, creating economic opportunities and fostering closer cultural ties.
- **Renewable Energy and Sustainability:** Joint ventures in solar and wind energy will support Maldives' commitment to climate-friendly growth.
- **Education and Skill Development:** Expansion of academic exchanges and vocational training programs will empower Maldivian youth and deepen people-to-people bonds.

### Conclusion: A Partnership Anchored in Trust and Shared Vision

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Maldives not only reaffirmed India's role as a reliable partner but also underscored the shared aspirations of both nations for peace, prosperity, and sustainability. Strengthened security cooperation and expanded economic ties position the two countries to effectively address regional challenges and harness mutual growth opportunities.

This visit exemplifies how diplomacy and strategic engagement can reinforce regional stability and promote inclusive development. As India and Maldives deepen their partnership, they lay the foundation for a resilient and prosperous Indian Ocean region—anchored in mutual respect, cooperation, and a shared vision for the future.



# Focus of the month

## DIGITAL INCLUSION IN INDIA: BUILDING A CONNECTED AND EMPOWERED NATION

### Introduction

In the 21st century, digital connectivity has emerged as a cornerstone for socio-economic development, education, governance, and inclusive growth. For India, a country of vast diversity and scale, digital inclusion — ensuring access to digital technologies for all sections of society — is both a challenge and an opportunity. The government's vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society underlines the critical role digital inclusion plays in fostering equity, empowerment, and economic progress.

Digital inclusion aims to bridge the gap between those who have access to information and communication technologies (ICT) and those who do not. It focuses on enabling rural, marginalized, and underserved communities to participate fully in the digital economy and access essential services.

### Key Initiatives Driving Digital Inclusion in India

India has launched several ambitious programs to promote digital inclusion and ensure connectivity reaches every citizen:

- **Digital India Mission:** Launched in 2015, this flagship program seeks to improve digital infrastructure, provide digital literacy, and deliver government services electronically. It targets key areas such as broadband connectivity, mobile access, and digital literacy programs.
- **BharatNet Project:** BharatNet is one of the world's largest rural broadband projects, aiming to connect over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats with high-speed internet. This initiative is vital for enhancing internet penetration in rural and remote areas.
- **Common Services Centres (CSCs):** CSCs act as access points for delivery of various electronic services, ranging from e-governance to healthcare and banking, particularly in rural regions. They serve as bridges to bring digital services closer to the grassroots.
- **Digital Literacy Campaigns:** Programs like the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) aim to empower millions of rural citizens with basic digital skills, enabling them to use smartphones, internet, and digital payment systems effectively.

### Importance of Digital Inclusion for Socio-Economic Development

Digital inclusion is pivotal for achieving several socio-economic goals:

- **Empowering Education:** Access to digital tools and internet connectivity enables remote learning, online courses, and educational resources, breaking barriers posed by geography and socio-economic status.
- **Enhancing Healthcare:** Telemedicine, digital health records, and online consultations expand healthcare reach, particularly in underserved areas, improving overall public health outcomes.
- **Boosting Financial Inclusion:** Digital banking and payment systems like Unified Payments Interface (UPI) facilitate secure, fast, and affordable financial transactions, integrating more citizens into the formal economy.
- **Promoting Governance Transparency:** Digital platforms streamline public service delivery, reduce corruption, and enable citizens to access government schemes efficiently.

### Challenges in Achieving Digital Inclusion

Despite progress, India faces several challenges on the path to full digital inclusion:

- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Rural and remote areas still suffer from inadequate broadband and electricity infrastructure, limiting access.
- **Digital Literacy Deficit:** A significant portion of the population remains unaware or uncomfortable using digital devices and services, especially among older adults and women.
- **Language and Accessibility Barriers:** Digital content predominantly in English and Hindi excludes many regional language speakers and people with disabilities.
- **Affordability Issues:** The cost of devices and internet plans remains a hurdle for economically weaker sections.



### Way Forward

To overcome these challenges, India must focus on:

- **Expanding Rural Infrastructure:** Accelerate broadband and mobile network expansion, ensuring reliable internet and electricity supply to all regions.
- **Promoting Multilingual Digital Content:** Develop government services, educational content, and apps in multiple regional languages to enhance accessibility.
- **Strengthening Digital Literacy:** Scale up digital literacy programs, especially targeting women, senior citizens, and marginalized communities.
- **Making Devices Affordable:** Encourage innovation in low-cost technology and incentivize affordable access to digital devices and data plans.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborate with private sector and NGOs to create innovative solutions and ensure last-mile digital connectivity.

### Conclusion

Digital inclusion is more than technology access—it is about empowering every citizen to participate fully in India's socio-economic growth story. As India strides towards becoming a \$5 trillion economy, ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital revolution is essential for building a fair, equitable, and prosperous society.

Through sustained government efforts, community engagement, and technological innovation, India is steadily building a connected and empowered nation where digital opportunities are accessible to all.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Industrial Safety in India

*General Studies-3 Topic: Government policies, interventions, reforms in industrial safety, and their impact on economic and social well-being.*

### Introduction:

- Industrial safety in India is not merely a compliance checkbox but a foundational pillar of sustainable economic development. In a nation witnessing rapid industrial expansion, from traditional manufacturing to pharmaceuticals, mining, and chemicals, the imperative to protect workers, communities, and the environment has never been more urgent. As recent accidents demonstrate, lapses in safety not only cause immense human and financial loss but also erode public trust and investor confidence.

### Why Industrial Safety Matters

- Human Lives and Dignity:** The foremost goal of robust safety protocols is the protection of workers from fatal accidents and debilitating injuries. Industrial disasters disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including contract and migrant workers.
- Economic Implications:** Accidents result in production losses, insurance payouts, legal liabilities, and reputational damage, collectively hurting business bottom lines and national productivity.
- Legal Mandates:** Laws like the Factories Act (1948), Mines Act (1952), and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC) Code (2020) mandate that employers ensure workplace safety, report incidents, and promote health standards.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** SDG 8 (Decent Work) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) underscore the global responsibility of governments to maintain safe, healthy, and inclusive workplaces.

### Major Challenges

- Neglected Small and Informal Sector:** While major industries often comply with safety requirements, small and medium-scale enterprises frequently operate with outdated machinery, minimal training, and little awareness.
- Weak Enforcement:** India's labor inspection machinery remains under-resourced. Official data suggests that a significant percentage of factories go uninspected for years.
- Low Awareness and Training Deficit:** Many workers remain unaware of basic safety practices, from safe machine handling to emergency protocols.
- Technological Gaps:** Despite advances like sensor-based monitoring and AI-driven risk detection, technology penetration is uneven, especially in hazardous industries like mining, construction, and fireworks.
- Underreporting and Non-Transparency:** Fear of penalties or lack of robust reporting discourages the open documentation of minor incidents, thus preventing pattern recognition and timely interventions.

### Key Government Initiatives and Policies

- OSHC Code (2020):** Harmonizes and updates India's fragmented labor laws, pushes for single licensing, mandatory safety audits, and promotes worker training.

- Digital Monitoring and E-Inspection:** Platforms such as Shram Suvidha Portal have brought transparency to inspections, reducing corruption and paperwork.
- Training Initiatives:** Schemes like the National Safety Awards and regular capacity-building programs by state factories' inspectorates encourage best practices and skill upgradation.
- Special Drives Post-Accidents:** After major disasters (like the Vizag gas tragedy), the government initiated detailed safety audits and remedial guidelines on hazardous chemical management.
- National Policy on Safety, Health and Environment at Workplace:** Focuses on risk management, worker participation, and integrating modern safety culture in management systems.

### Innovative Practices and Way Forward

- Technological Integration:** Use of IoT-enabled sensors, AI-powered surveillance, and predictive analytics for early detection of gas leaks, fire hazards, and equipment malfunctions.
- Strengthening Enforcement:** Recruitment of qualified inspectors, transparent and regular inspection calendars, and adoption of "surprise audits."
- Worker Empowerment:** Ensuring access to personal protective equipment, incentivizing reporting and whistleblowing, and involving workers in periodic safety committees.
- Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between government and industry bodies (like CII, FICCI) on workshops, research, and safety ratings can set higher voluntary benchmarks.
- National Safety Culture Campaigns:** Like Swachh Bharat for cleanliness, a nation-wide campaign on industrial safety, with multimedia outreach and localized initiatives, can transform mindsets.
- Legal and Policy Reform:** Periodic updating of safety standards, harsher penalties for wilful neglect, and compulsory third-party safety audits for high-risk industries.
- Focus on Women and Migrant Workers:** Customizing protocols and education to protect marginalized workers who often lack voice and visibility.

### Conclusion

- Industrial safety is the linchpin connecting individual worker welfare with macroeconomic growth. As India aspires to become a global manufacturing hub, the government, industry, and civil society must collaborate to foster a preventive safety culture. Transparent reporting, strict enforcement, technological innovation, and continuous capacity-building are critical pathways for India to transition from reactive to predictive and inclusive industrial safety management.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Cooling Price Pressures in Indian Economy

*General Studies-3 Topic: Indian Economy issues relating to growth, development, and inflation management; government interventions and monetary policy support.*

### Introduction:

- **Price stability** is central to sustainable economic growth, equitable income distribution, and social harmony. The last few years have seen the Indian economy navigating severe price shocks due to global disruptions, supply bottlenecks, and volatile demand. As inflation reached multi-year highs, it posed threats to household budgets, business planning, and investor confidence, making "cooling price pressures" a top priority for policymakers.

### Why Cooling Price Pressures Matters

- **Protecting Consumer Welfare:** Steep rises in food and fuel prices disproportionately hurt the poor, eroding real incomes and savings.
- **Maintaining Economic Momentum:** Persistent inflation discourages investment, disrupts project cashflows, and prompts wage hikes, leading to a potential inflationary spiral.
- **Ensuring Macroeconomic Credibility:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is legally mandated to maintain CPI inflation within a 2-6% target band.
- **Social Stability:** High inflation amplifies economic inequalities, stokes social unrest, and increases political risks.

### Root Causes of Price Pressures

1. **Global Shocks:** The Russia-Ukraine conflict, post-pandemic commodity surges, and OPEC's output reductions led to imported inflation, particularly in crude oil, edible oils, and metals.
2. **Supply Chain Disruptions:** Lockdowns exposed vulnerabilities, with logistics breakdowns raising transportation costs for essentials.
3. **Weather Variance:** Droughts and floods periodically impact cereal and vegetable output, translating swiftly into retail inflation spikes.
4. **Currency Depreciation:** A weakening rupee increases the cost of imports, particularly energy, fertilizers, and pulses.
5. **High Fiscal Deficits:** Expanded welfare spending during COVID-19 recovery contributed to demand-pull inflation in urban and rural regions.

### Government and RBI Responses

- **Monetary Tightening:** The RBI hiked policy rates, restricted liquidity through variable rate reverse repo auctions, and deployed macroprudential controls to limit credit expansion.
- **Strategic Reserve Deployment:** Timely release of foodgrains, sugar, and edible oils from public stocks helped moderate market prices.
- **Trade Policy Tweaks:** Lower import duties (on oil, pulses) and export restrictions (on wheat, rice) ensured domestic supplies and price stability.
- **Expanding Social Nets:** Schemes like PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana cushioned over 800 million citizens from food price shocks during the pandemic.

- **Price Monitoring Cells:** Real-time retail price tracking across key markets enabled timely interventions.

### Impact and Outcomes

- **Headline Inflation Moderation:** After peaking above 7%, CPI inflation has receded closer to RBI's mandated range, stabilizing consumer expectations.
- **Boosted Rural Support:** Targeted cash and food transfers protected the most vulnerable, mitigating hunger and rural distress.
- **Sectoral Recovery:** Eased prices restored demand in FMCG, retail, and housing, supporting broader economic recovery.

### Challenges and the Road Ahead

- **Imported Volatility:** Ongoing geopolitical crises and monetary tightening in advanced economies could re-ignite inflation.
- **Structural Food Inflation:** Inadequate cold storage, labor shortages, and supply chain fragmentation keep farm-to-fork costs high.
- **Energy Dependency:** With over 80% of oil imported, India remains vulnerable to global shocks.

### Strategies for Sustained Relief

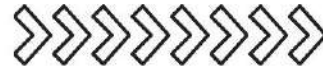
- **Strengthening Agri-Logistics:** Investment in supply chains, storages, and local procurement reduces wastages and volatile price swings.
- **Energizing Renewables:** Faster transition to solar, wind, and green hydrogen can insulate the economy from imported fuel spikes.
- **Institutional Coordination:** Robust data sharing, forward-looking reserve management, and periodic CPI basket reviews can enhance agility.
- **People-Centric Reforms:** Continuation of targeted subsidies, off-cycle interventions, and public communications to manage inflationary expectations.

### Conclusion

- Cooling price pressures in India is a multidimensional challenge requiring nimble monetary policy, agile fiscal actions, and robust market intelligence. The government's ability to anticipate shocks, coordinate institutions, and protect the poor will define the resilience and inclusivity of India's growth journey.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Regulating Online Gaming in India

*General Studies - 2/3 Topic: Government policy, regulatory interventions, technology ethics, and social impact.*

### Introduction:

India's digital landscape is undergoing a profound transformation, and the burgeoning online gaming industry stands at its forefront. The sector, valued at billions of dollars, has become a hub of innovation, employment, and recreation. Yet, its meteoric rise presents a unique challenge: how can India harness the benefits of this digital sector while addressing its risks of addiction, financial fraud, and social harm?

### Why Regulation is Imperative

- **Social Concerns:** The rise in compulsive gaming, especially among youth, highlights risks of addiction, academic neglect, and mental health issues.
- **Financial Risks:** Some online games, particularly those involving betting or real-money transactions, expose users to significant monetary loss and vulnerability to fraud.
- **Legal Ambiguity:** The Indian Constitution empowers both Central and State governments to legislate on gambling and betting, resulting in a patchwork of laws with inconsistent enforcement.
- **National Security and Data Privacy:** Many gaming apps gather user data, raising questions about cybersecurity and privacy, especially when foreign platforms are involved.

### Recent Government Actions

- **Draft Frameworks:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) recently proposed comprehensive guidelines to govern online gaming. Key aspects include a self-regulatory organization (SRO) system, mandatory registration, and grievance redressal mechanisms.
- **KYC and Verification:** Game providers are now expected to follow stringent Know Your Customer (KYC) procedures to verify user identities and minimize abuse.
- **Banning Harmful Apps:** The government has banned or restricted access to hundreds of apps suspected of being harmful to children or involved in illegal betting.

### Challenges

- **State Versus Central Jurisdiction:** With states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Telangana imposing strict bans on certain online games, and others allowing operations under regulation, industry faces compliance and operational uncertainty.
- **Distinguishing Skill from Chance:** Judicial interpretations often draw a line between 'games of skill' (like chess or rummy) and 'games of chance' (betting, gambling), leading to legal ambiguities.
- **Rapid Evolution:** New game formats and monetization models, such as loot boxes and fantasy sports, constantly test regulatory frameworks.
- **Youth Safeguarding:** Protecting underage gamers requires collaboration with parents and educational institutions along with technological tools.

### International Best Practices

- **Mandatory Age Verification:** Enforcing strict digital proof-of-age systems, as seen in Europe, to prevent underage gaming.
- **Spending and Time Limits:** China and South Korea mandate upper limits on playing hours and in-game spending to curb addiction.
- **Transparency in Algorithms:** Requiring platforms to disclose odds in games involving chance-based rewards.

### Recommendations and Way Forward

- **Central Regulatory Body:** Establish a nodal authority empowered to interpret, update, and enforce unified gaming standards nationwide.
- **Multi-Stakeholder SROs:** Promote effective self-regulation backed by technical audits, regular compliance checks, and user awareness campaigns.
- **Robust Grievance Redressal:** Create fast-track complaint mechanisms for users to report fraud, harassment, or forced spending.
- **Responsible Innovation:** Encourage developers to integrate features such as playtime reminders, parental controls, and clear information about in-game purchases.
- **Legal Clarity:** Amend archaic gambling legislation to reflect digital realities, balancing state autonomy with minimum national standards.

### Conclusion

India's approach to regulating online gaming must strike a prudent balance, safeguarding users from harm while nurturing innovation and economic growth. As digital recreation becomes mainstream, proactive, collaborative, and adaptive regulation is the need of the hour.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Vice President of India: Role, Powers, and Relevance

*General Studies-2 Topic: Indian Constitution, polity, and high offices.*

### Introduction:

- The Vice President of India, the nation's second-highest constitutional authority, remains a pivotal but sometimes underappreciated link in the country's parliamentary democracy. While the office is often seen as primarily ceremonial, its true significance lies in both its defined constitutional responsibilities and its broader symbolic importance.

### Constitutional Mandate

- **Article 63–70, Indian Constitution:** The Vice President is elected by an electoral college consisting of members of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- **Ex-officio Chairperson of Rajya Sabha:** Presides over the upper house of Parliament, ensuring decorum, regulating debates, and acting as a neutral arbiter.
- **Acting President:** Steps in as acting President in the event of a vacancy in the office or if the President is temporarily unable to discharge duties.

### Major Functions

- **Legislative Leadership:** As Rajya Sabha chair, the Vice President shapes the legislative agenda, ensures smooth passage of bills, and exercises casting vote in case of ties.
- **Bipartisan Bridge:** Holds responsibility for balancing the interests of the government and opposition, and facilitating consensus-building.
- **National Representation:** On occasion, represents India at international events and ceremonial occasions.

### Current Debates and Challenges

- **Dynamic Parliamentary Context:** Increasing partisanship in Parliament tests the Vice President's ability to remain impartial and preserve the dignity of the Rajya Sabha.

- **Role in Lawmaking:** As more crucial bills are designated 'money bills' (passed only in Lok Sabha), the Vice President's powers to influence lawmaking face limitations.
- **Active Engagement:** Calls are growing for the Vice President to engage more in public discourse, policy debates, and to serve as a moral leader during times of constitutional crisis.

### Recent Developments

- **Technological Modernization:** Adoption of digital tools to run paperless sessions, manage the Question Hour, and disseminate information in real time.
- **Parliamentary Reforms:** Increased focus on discipline, transparency, and better utilization of committee work.

### Way Forward

- **Impartiality and Decorum:** The Vice President must nurture parliamentary etiquette and act as a custodian of the Constitution.
- **Strengthening Committees:** Greater emphasis on Rajya Sabha committees can make lawmaking more robust and participatory.
- **Inclusive Engagement:** Engaging youth, experts, and civil society in parliamentary dialogue widens democratic participation.
- **Continuity and Succession:** The officeholder must always be prepared to perform presidential responsibilities at a moment's notice.

### Conclusion

- The Vice President's office is integral to India's political stability and procedural integrity. As the country's polity becomes more complex, the Vice President's role as a statesman, mediator, and upholder of constitutional values becomes ever more vital.

# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Language Tussle and the Three Language Formula

*General Studies-1/2 Topic: Indian society, culture, education policy, federal issues.*

### Introduction

- India's linguistic diversity is a treasure but also a persistent source of contention. The "three language formula," conceived to promote unity in diversity, continues to spark debate, often exposing the delicate balance between national integration and regional identity.

- Digital and Distance Learning:** New technology platforms are being promoted to overcome teacher shortages and build bilingual/multilingual content.
- Promotion of Classical and Tribal Languages:** The government also seeks to preserve endangered languages by integrating them into curricula.

### Background and Rationale

- Initial Framework:** The three language formula was first articulated in the National Policy on Education (1968), refined in 1986, and re-emphasized in the National Education Policy 2020.
- Objective:** Ensure that all students learn Hindi, English, and a regional/mother tongue, thereby building national cohesion and global competitiveness while safeguarding local identities.

### Impact on Society and Polity

- Unity in Diversity:** Success in teaching multiple languages can promote empathy and openness, but forced imposition risks alienating communities.
- Federalism Debates:** Language policy remains a sensitive test of India's cooperative federalism. The central government's role is to guide, but not dictate, policy to states.
- Employment and Mobility:** Proficiency in Hindi and English can expand job opportunities nationally and globally, but must not come at the expense of regional pride and linguistic pluralism.

### Current Issues

- Resistance in Non-Hindi States:** Southern and Northeastern states, where Hindi is not a native language, often view the formula as an attempt to impose Hindi, triggering fears about cultural erosion.
- Implementation Challenges:** A lack of qualified teachers, teaching material, and resources make effective rollout difficult. States like Tamil Nadu have retained the two-language policy.
- Policy Ambiguity:** While the formula recommends teaching three languages, it does not specify which should be offered, leaving states with significant leeway.
- Migration and Urbanization:** Growing migration has made classrooms more linguistically diverse, creating both opportunities and practical problems for uniform language education.

### Way Forward

- Consultative Policy-Making:** Engage state governments, educators, and community leaders to customize the formula for local needs.
- Teacher Training and Materials:** Invest in professional development and open educational resources for all prescribed languages.
- Celebrate Multilingualism:** Use media, arts, and civic campaigns to celebrate India's linguistic mosaic without privileging any one group.
- Leverage Technology:** AI-driven language apps, translation software, and digital classrooms can bridge gaps and support equitable language learning.

### Conclusion

- The language debate is a microcosm of Indian democracy, where unity is forged not by uniformity, but by honoring diversity. The effective implementation of the three language formula calls for a spirit of flexibility, consultation, and respect for all tongues on the Indian soil.

### Government Response and NEP 2020

- Flexibility and Parental Choice:** NEP 2020 recognizes these issues, stating that no language will be imposed. Schools and states can choose the three languages, with at least two being native to India.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## India's Strategic Autonomy and the West's Sanctions Diplomacy

*General Studies-2; Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.*

### **Introduction: A Diplomatic Crossroads**

- As tensions sharpen between Russia and the West, India finds itself in the eye of a geopolitical storm. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte's veiled threat of secondary sanctions on India, China, and Brazil for their continued trade with Russia has been met with a strong diplomatic pushback from New Delhi.
- This clash is far more than a policy disagreement, it is emblematic of the growing divide between the Global North's coercive diplomacy and the Global South's assertion of independent foreign policy choices.

### **Backdrop: Sanctions, Selectivity, and Subtext**

- Since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022, Western powers, led by NATO and the European Union, have spearheaded an expansive sanctions campaign against Russia.
- Yet, even as they ask other nations to fall in line, many EU countries themselves continue to import Russian energy albeit through indirect routes.
- A 2024 CREA report highlights this paradox: refined petroleum products, especially those processed in countries like India and Turkey, continue to make their way to Europe.
- India, in fact, has emerged as the EU's largest supplier of refined oil products, exposing the double standards in the sanctions discourse.

### **India's Energy Priorities: Between Principle and Pragmatism**

- India relies on imports for almost 88% of its crude oil needs, with Russia supplying nearly 40% of that in 2024. These supplies often come at discounted rates, offering crucial relief to India's economy and consumers.
- The Vadinar Refinery in Gujarat, partially owned by Russian oil giant Rosneft, is now under EU scrutiny. But India remains unfazed.
- The Petroleum Minister has clearly stated that decisions on energy cooperation will be based on national interest, not foreign diktats.

### **New Delhi's Firm Response: Sovereignty Over Subservience**

- India has made it abundantly clear to Western interlocutors including US senators and European leaders, that its strategic and economic decisions will not be shaped by external pressure.
- The External Affairs Ministry reminded them that strategic autonomy and energy security are core principles, just as they are for the West.
- India has termed NATO's remarks as "unilateral and non-constructive," reiterating its support for a rules-based global order, but one that is free from coercion.

### **Escalating Pressures: US Moves to Weaponize Trade**

- Sanctions diplomacy is now being backed by proposed legislative actions in the US. A bill supported by over 170 lawmakers and former President Trump calls for a 500% tariff on countries continuing to trade with Russia.
- Trump has gone further, threatening 100% tariffs if peace talks do not begin within 50 days.
- Such extreme moves amount to economic warfare, endangering global trade systems and exposing the fragility of multilateral institutions.

### **The Flaws of Secondary Sanctions**

- Secondary sanctions punishing third-party nations for not following US/EU sanctions, erode national sovereignty, disrupt WTO principles, and promote economic fragmentation.
- They set a dangerous precedent, where unilateralism trumps diplomacy.
- These measures damage mutual trust among trading partners and can fuel global economic instability, especially for the developing world.

### **A Reality Check: Have Sanctions Worked?**

- Historical evidence casts doubt on the effectiveness of sanctions. Despite years of restrictions Iran continues its nuclear ambitions.

### **Russia has adapted through**

- Domestic manufacturing growth
- Stronger trade ties with China, India, and the Gulf
- Non-dollar payment systems and shadow fleets

The political outcomes regime change or de-escalation have not materialized, making the sanctions strategy appear symbolic, not strategic.

### **India's Independent Path: Not Neutral, but Non-Aligned**

India's foreign policy is grounded in non-alignment, not passivity. It has:

- Abstained from UN resolutions that take sides
- Maintained strong ties with both Western capitals and Moscow
- Pursued diversified partnerships across energy and investment
- Whether it's green hydrogen with Europe, solar energy with the US, or oil storage deals with BRICS nations, India's strategy is clear: multipolarity is the future, and hedging is necessary.

### **Global South's Pushback: A Collective Stand**

- Countries across the Global South from Brazil to Indonesia are increasingly resisting Western pressure. They seek to protect their sovereignty in foreign trade and decision-making.
- Europe's quiet continuation of Russian energy imports undercuts its moral posturing. NATO's selective enforcement reveals a neo-colonial instinct, expecting deference from the Global South while doing what it forbids others to do.

### **India's Long Game: Building Energy Resilience**

India is not just reacting it is planning. Its long-term strategy includes:

- Expanding Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)
- Scaling up renewable energy: solar, green hydrogen, ethanol
- Deepening energy ties with Russia, the Middle East, the US
- Boosting domestic refining and innovation

This multi-pronged approach is about future-proofing India's energy and economic sovereignty.

### **The Road Ahead: Key Priorities for India**

- Assert Diplomatic Independence: Continue rejecting coercive threats diplomatically and publicly.
- Strengthen Multilateral Platforms: Use BRICS, G20, SCO to push back against unilateralism.
- Diversify Trade and Energy Partners: Reduce Western economic leverage.
- Accelerate Energy Transition: Invest aggressively in renewables and alternatives.
- Enhance Domestic Resilience: Strengthen internal infrastructure to withstand global volatility.

### **Conclusion: A Message from the Global South**

- India's rejection of NATO's sanction pressure is more than self-defense, it's a symbol of Global South assertion. As the West struggles with its contradictions, India is setting a precedent: national interest will not be sacrificed at the altar of geopolitical theatrics.
- This stance is not about isolation; it is about independent engagement in a world moving away from unipolar dominance. India's voice is growing louder and it speaks not only for itself but for an entire bloc of emerging powers ready to define their own paths.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## India's Roadmap for Research Security in Strategic Sectors

*General Studies-3; Topic: Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.*

### **Introduction: Innovation Without Protection Is Vulnerability**

- As India charts its journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, science and technology form the backbone of its aspirations.
- With advancements in fields like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductors, space tech, and biotechnology, the country is rapidly positioning itself at the cutting edge of global innovation.
- But with great innovation comes great vulnerability. As R&D investments surge, so does the need to shield sensitive research from cyber threats, espionage, and misuse. Without adequate safeguards, India's strategic gains could become soft targets for foreign adversaries and malicious actors.

### **Understanding Research Security: Beyond Just Cyber Defence**

- At its core, research security refers to the protection of critical intellectual property, infrastructure, and scientific data from unauthorized access, surveillance, or manipulation.

Why it matters:

- Prevents the diversion of sensitive discoveries to foreign or hostile interests
- Safeguards national security and strategic advantage in emerging tech
- Preserves trust in the integrity and confidentiality of high-stakes research

In a hyper-connected world, protecting innovation is as important as creating it.

### **India's Strategic Research Frontiers Under Threat**

Several high-value domains are particularly exposed to risks:

- **Space & Defence:** Satellite systems, launch tech, and defence R&D are attractive targets for espionage
- **Semiconductors:** Critical for digital independence, chip R&D is vulnerable to sabotage or theft
- **Biotechnology:** Genomic data, vaccines, and agri-tech hold economic and public health significance
- **Quantum & AI:** Foundational technologies for the next era of cybersecurity, automation, and warfare

These sectors are not just about progress, they're about power, leverage, and sovereignty.

### **What the World Has Learned: Case Studies in Research Vulnerability**

Global events offer cautionary tales:

- **Harvard-China Espionage Case:** A stark reminder of how covert foreign ties can infiltrate defence-funded academia
- **COVID-19 Vaccine Theft (2020):** State-backed actors attempted to steal critical health research globally
- **ESA Cyber Breaches:** Exposed the fragile nature of even the most advanced space institutions

### **How Nations Are Responding?**

**USA:**

- CHIPS and Science Act embeds security in tech funding.
- NIST Framework offers tailored security protocols for research organizations.

**Canada:**

- Implements sector-specific restrictions for high-risk partnerships.

**EU:**

- Adopts a flexible, risk-based approach, allowing sectoral regulation.

**China:**

- Through Military-Civil Fusion, civilian research is often absorbed into strategic military objectives, a model that alarms democracies worldwide.

### **India's Current Gaps: Innovation Outpacing Protection**

- **Despite progress,** India lacks a cohesive research security strategy.
- **Low Policy Priority:** Research protection is not yet integrated into national S&T governance
- **Weak Monitoring Mechanisms:** International collaborations are often unsupervised
- **Cyber Insecurity:** Many labs operate with outdated infrastructure and poor digital hygiene
- **Resistance from Academia:** Researchers may perceive tighter controls as threats to academic freedom

India's challenge is to design a system that protects without stifling innovation or openness.

### **Policy Recommendations: Building a Shield Without a Cage**

#### **1. Policy & Institutional Reforms**

- **Develop National Research Security Guidelines:** Inspired by the EU's flexible, proportionate model
  - **Set Up a Research Security Cell** within the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) to coordinate efforts
  - **Identify and Classify Critical Research domains** that require tighter regulation
- #### **2. Operational and Technical Interventions**
- **Upgrade Cyber Infrastructure:** Equip labs with secure digital environments
  - **Screen Personnel and Control Access:** Vet researchers working on sensitive projects
  - **Involve All Stakeholders:** Engage academic institutions, industry players, and think tanks in shaping practical policies
- #### **3. Strengthen International Cooperation**
- **Forge alliances with like-minded countries** (e.g., US, Canada, EU) to share threat intelligence and best practices.
  - **Participate in standard-setting forums** for ethical and secure global collaboration.

### **The Way Forward: Balancing Openness with Vigilance**

India must walk a fine line:

- **Build a robust governance ecosystem** that clearly defines roles for ministries, institutions, and academia.
- **Invest in capacity-building** digital security infrastructure, cybersecurity talent, and surveillance tech.
- **Cultivate a culture of research responsibility,** where innovation and awareness go hand in hand.
- **Align with international norms,** ensuring that security measures do not isolate Indian researchers from global networks.

### **Conclusion: Innovation Needs Guardianship**

- India's ambition to become a global science leader by 2047 is credible but only if matched with a future-ready research security framework.
- The goal isn't to restrict collaboration or choke creativity, it's to ensure that India's breakthroughs remain secure, sovereign, and beneficial to its people.
- In an age of cyberwarfare and technological espionage, protecting innovation is itself a form of innovation. India must now lead by example, showing how a vibrant knowledge economy can coexist with strategic foresight and national security



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Rethinking Public Food Policy in India

*General Studies-2; Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

### **Introduction: From Signboards to Systemic Shifts**

- In June 2025, the Government of India issued an advisory urging ministries to place signboards highlighting the health risks of foods high in sugar and fat such as samosas, jalebis, kachoris, and pastries.
- The move, though misinterpreted as a ban, was clarified by the Health Ministry as a behavioral nudge, not an enforcement measure.
- This advisory sparked a flurry of media debates, memes, and political reactions. But beyond the noise, it reveals a deeper issue: India's fragmented approach to public food policy.
- With obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) on the rise, the time has come to shift from symbolic measures to sustained, multi-sector dietary reform.

### **The Health Context: Obesity Is No Longer a Privileged Problem**

Data paints a worrying picture:

- According to NFHS-5, over 24% of urban men and 21% of women are overweight or obese.
- The World Obesity Federation predicts 500 million overweight Indians by 2050.
- A major contributor? The unchecked rise of ultra-processed foods, fried snacks, and sugary beverages especially in public food environments like railway stations, government offices, and airports.
- The government's advisory, though well-meaning, is simply the first step in reshaping the food ecosystem that currently favours convenience over health.

### **Behavioral Nudges: Necessary but Not Sufficient**

Behavioral nudges aim to influence choices without enforcing bans. Globally, countries like:

- UK use 'traffic light' food labels,
- Chile mandates warning signs on unhealthy food packaging.
- India's dietary approach is aligned with this model, but its effectiveness is limited when healthy alternatives are scarce, expensive, or invisible. Behavioral economics confirms: nudges only work when people have viable, accessible alternatives.

### **Public Food Environments: Fried First, Health Last**

- Take a walk through any public space stations, terminals, airports and the pattern is clear: fried, sugary, salty snacks dominate. Healthy, affordable choices are either missing or marginal.
- Even meals on premium trains like Rajdhani and Vande Bharat serve breaded outlets and sugary desserts.
- In government canteens, millet-based or low-fat options are rare and poorly promoted.
- This skewed choice architecture reinforces unhealthy eating as the default, especially for lower- and middle-income populations.

### **India's Nutritional Crossroads: Double Burden of Malnutrition**

- India now faces a paradox of both undernutrition and overnutrition:
- The Lancet's Global Burden of Disease study (2020) ranks poor diet as a major risk factor for heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.
- Childhood obesity is rising rapidly nearly 10% of children aged 5–19 are overweight or obese (CNNS 2016–18).
- This silent epidemic demands more than just advisories, it requires a transformation in how food is produced, distributed, and consumed.

### **Multi-Ministerial Strategy: Whole-of-Government Approach Needed**

- Healthy eating cannot be the Health Ministry's responsibility alone. A coordinated policy ecosystem is crucial:
- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare: Lead national dietary guidelines and public campaigns.
- Ministry of Railways & Transport: Ensure healthy food stalls across stations and trains.

- Ministry of Food Processing Industries: Promote affordable, low-fat food innovation.
  - Ministry of Education & FSSAI: Regulate food labelling, drive nutrition literacy in schools.
  - Urban Local Bodies: Enforce food zoning laws in markets and transit hubs.
- Without shared ownership, dietary policies will continue to be siloed and ineffective.

### **Leveraging National Dietary Guidelines for Everyday Eating**

India doesn't lack guidance, it lacks implementation.

The National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) has already laid out detailed Dietary Guidelines (2020) advocating:

- Whole grains like millets and brown rice
- Traditional snacks like poha, idli, dhokla, roasted chana
- Seasonal fruits and vegetables

These can form the foundation of menus in train pantries, canteens, and government food services if systematically adopted.

### **Partnering with Culinary and Nutrition Institutions**

Innovation and implementation go hand in hand. Government can collaborate with:

- IHMs and culinary institutes for recipe redesign and training modules
- Food startups to scale up healthy alternatives
- Local entrepreneurs and vendors for low-cost millet and legume-based snacks
- With ingredients like ragi, bajra, jackfruit, and pulses, India already has a rich culinary base to reimagine public food in a healthier way.

### **Creating a Choice-Based, Inclusive Food Ecosystem**

A democratic food system doesn't ban unhealthy choices but ensures healthy ones are easily available, affordable, and visible.

### **Key Interventions:**

- At every public food hub, 2–3 out of every 20 vendors should serve nutritious options
- Introduce "Healthy Kiosks" in collaboration with Eat Right India and POSHAN Abhiyaan
- Offer subsidized millet or fruit-based snacks in government-run food services
- Use public-private partnerships to scale and sustain this model

### **Structural Reforms Beyond Labelling**

- While front-of-pack labelling and warnings (under consideration by FSSAI) are essential, deeper structural reforms are needed:
- Introduce a fat/sugar tax on ultra-processed foods, inspired by models in Mexico and Hungary
- Ban junk food advertising aimed at children especially through digital platforms
- Fast-track implementation of the School Health Programme under Ayushman Bharat
- Integrate nutrition into Smart Cities and Swachh Bharat through health audits and digital feedback tools

### **The Road Ahead: Making Health the Default**

To move from rhetoric to reality, India must:

- Create a national healthy eating framework rooted in equity, affordability, and regional food wisdom
- Regularly monitor food supply and offerings in public settings through nutrition audits
- Incentivize food innovation that respects both health and local taste preferences
- Align nutrition with urban planning, public health goals, and digital innovation efforts

### **Conclusion: From Awareness to Access**

- The 2025 advisory on fatty and sugary foods is a starting signal, not a solution. Real transformation lies in redesigning India's public food ecosystem where healthier options are not just advised, but available, affordable, and aspirational.
- As India grapples with rising lifestyle diseases and a shifting nutritional landscape, a holistic, evidence-driven, and inter-sectoral food policy is not just desirable, it's essential for a healthier, more resilient future.





# EDITORIAL SECTION



## India's Equality Ranking and the Reality of Rising Inequality

*General Studies-3; Topic: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.*

### Introduction: A Misleading Milestone

- A recent claim positioned India as the fourth most equal country in the world, a statistic that garnered attention and praise. However, this assertion stems from a selective interpretation of a World Bank report, based solely on the consumption-based Gini coefficient.
- While consumption inequality may have marginally declined, this narrow reading ignores deeper structural inequalities in income and wealth, masking the lived reality of millions.
- True equality cannot be captured through a single metric, especially one that doesn't reflect accumulated wealth, income distribution, or opportunity access.

### Understanding the Gini Coefficient: One Metric, Many Realities

- The Gini coefficient is widely used to measure inequality, ranging from 0 (perfect equality) to 100 (complete inequality). But it comes in different forms:

### Consumption-based Gini: Measures spending patterns

- Income-based Gini: Captures earnings inequality
- Wealth-based Gini: Reflects asset concentration
- India's low consumption Gini paints a deceptively optimistic picture, whereas income and wealth metrics reveal deep economic divides.

### The Claim vs The Caution: What the World Bank Actually Says

- The government cited a fall in consumption-based Gini from 28.8 (2011-12) to 25.5 (2022-23) to claim improved equality. However, the World Bank itself warns that:
- The decline may reflect survey limitations, particularly underreporting by the wealthy.
- Income and wage inequality remains alarmingly high.
- The consumption metric fails to capture real disparities in wealth accumulation.
- In essence, what's being claimed as progress may be an artefact of data blindness.

### Why Consumption Equality Doesn't Equal Real Equality

Consumption data often misrepresents the true scale of inequality:

- The wealthy spend less (as a proportion of income) and invest more this isn't captured in surveys.
  - The poor consume most of their income, making them more visible in consumption-based data.
  - Informal wealth, luxury spending, and black money remain outside the survey radar.
- Thus, consumption parity is not a reflection of economic parity.

### The Rise of Income Inequality: A More Telling Picture

According to the World Bank:

- India's income-based Gini rose from 52 (2004) to 62 (2023)
- India now ranks 176th out of 215 countries in income equality, a steep fall from its 115th rank in 2009
- In 2023-24, the top 10% earned 13x more than the bottom 10%
- This indicates that India's growth is skewed, benefiting the top tier far more than the rest.

### Wealth Inequality: A Crisis in Concentration

- India's wealth Gini is estimated at 75, a level of inequality comparable to the most unequal nations globally.

According to Oxfam and the World Inequality Lab:

- The top 1% own 40.1% of national wealth
- They earn 22.6% of total income, while the bottom 50% earn just 15%
- The bottom half owns a mere 6.4% of the country's wealth
- This degree of wealth concentration fuels intergenerational disadvantage, opportunity loss, and socio-economic alienation.

### Labour Inequality: Wages, Work, and Vulnerability

The labour market remains riddled with disparities:

- Casual and informal workers earn far less than their formal sector counterparts
- Gender wage gaps persist at 19-25%
- SCs/STs and Muslims are underrepresented in secure, well-paying jobs
- The gig economy, while expanding, often lacks social security and wage protection
- Without systemic labour reforms, work will remain a site of exploitation rather than empowerment.

### The Rural-Urban Divide: Geography of Inequality

India's urban centres dominate income, services, and infrastructure access. Despite improvements in rural consumption:

- Urban households consume more, earn more, and live longer
- Regional disparities persist, southern and western states consistently outperform central and eastern ones
- Migration pressures increase as rural areas struggle with opportunity deficits
- Bridging the rural-urban gap is key to any sustainable equality agenda.

### Global Comparison: India's Place in the Inequality Ladder

Using income-based Gini:

- India (2023): 62, Sweden: ~28, Germany: ~31, USA: ~41, South Africa (most unequal): ~63
- India, thus, ranks closer to South Africa than to social democracies like Germany or Sweden contradicting the claim of being among the world's most equal nations.

### Beyond Numbers: Reclaiming the Narrative on Equality

- At its core, equality is not just about statistical convergence, it is about lived realities. It reflects whether a child born into a low-income, rural, Dalit, or Muslim household can aspire to the same opportunities as someone born into privilege in urban India.
- The present discourse around India's "equality ranking" reduces this complex reality to a single, flawed number, risking complacency in the face of pressing structural problems.

### The Role of the State: From Passive Provider to Active Equalizer

The Indian Constitution, through Articles 38, 39, 46 and 47, mandates the State to ensure social justice and economic equity. However, policy action must move beyond headline schemes and focus on:

- Targeted capability-building: Enable the marginalised to compete fairly not just survive.
- Equitable digital access: Bridge the digital divide that limits modern opportunity.
- Affirmative resource distribution: Ensure land, credit, and education are not monopolised by the few.

The State must act as a catalyst for inclusive mobility, not just an administrator of minimum entitlements.

### Democracy and Data: The Missing Link

- A vibrant democracy thrives on credible data and open debate. When inequality is denied or diluted through selective metrics:
- Accountability erodes, weakening public institutions.
- Policy becomes delinked from ground realities, making interventions ineffective or misdirected.
- The people's faith in governance is tested when their hardships are dismissed in national narratives.
- For India to uphold its democratic values, data transparency and policy honesty must form the bedrock of governance.

### Inequality in the Global South Context

- India is not alone; many Global South countries face similar dilemmas of growth without equity.
- However, India's scale, demographic youth bulge, and technological capacity give it a unique opportunity to model a new development pathway, one that doesn't repeat the mistakes of the West.
- By investing in human capital, decentralized growth models, and inclusive technologies, India can set an example of socially responsible capitalism and people-centric progress.

### Conclusion: Equality is the Foundation of a Strong Republic

- India's story cannot be told through GDP numbers alone. It must be reflected in: The dignity of its workers, The aspirations of its youth, The empowerment of its women and minorities and the resilience of its rural communities
- To move toward that future, India must recognize the depth of its inequality, reclaim the narrative from misleading metrics, and rebuild public policy around the principle of equal dignity for all.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## RDI Scheme and the Push for a Research-Driven India

*General Studies-2; Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

### **Introduction: Innovation as Infrastructure for a Developed India**

- As India charts its trajectory toward becoming a developed nation by 2047, the need to transform into a knowledge and innovation-driven economy becomes urgent.
- In this context, the Union Cabinet's approval of the Research Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme marks a landmark effort to mainstream R&D in national development priorities.
- It sends a strong message: India is ready to innovate, not just imitate.

### **India's R&D Landscape: A Snapshot of Missed Opportunities**

- Despite being a global IT and pharmaceutical hub, India spends only 0.65% of its GDP on R&D, a figure stagnant for decades. This is starkly lower than:
- USA: ~2.7%, China: ~2.4%, South Korea & Israel: 4–5%
- Even more worrying is the low private sector participation, which accounts for just 35% of total R&D spending far below the global norm of 70–75%. As a result:
- India ranked 40th in the Global Innovation Index (2023)
- The country lags in patent filings, scientific output, and lab-to-market conversion
- This innovation deficit limits India's ability to lead in critical tech domains and erodes competitiveness in the global value chain.

### **The RDI Scheme: A Structural Reform in the Making**

- Implemented through: Anusandhan National Research Foundation (NRF)
- Corpus: ₹1 lakh crore over five years, one of India's largest public-private research investments.

### **Key Features:**

#### **Two-tier structure:**

- A central SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) will steer strategic direction and corpus management
- Independent fund managers will channel low- or zero-interest loans to private firms and institutions

#### **Targeted Sectors:**

- Artificial Intelligence
- Quantum Technologies
- Semiconductors
- Green Hydrogen & Energy
- Precision Agriculture
- Defence and Aerospace

The scheme isn't just a funding model, it's a strategic nudge toward building national technological sovereignty.

### **Objectives: Laying the Foundation for a Research Renaissance**

#### **1. Incentivizing Private Sector R&D**

- De-risking innovation for companies, especially MSMEs and startups
- Attracting corporate investment into frontier technologies

#### **2. Strengthening Industry-Academia Synergy**

- Funding collaborative research
- Bridging the gap between fundamental science and market-ready solutions

#### **3. Building a High-Impact Innovation Ecosystem**

- Enhancing IP creation
- Nurturing next-gen scientific talent
- Supporting tech translation and commercialization

#### **4. Securing Technological Self-Reliance**

- Reducing dependency in defence, energy, and digital infrastructure

Boosting India's capacity to respond to geopolitical and climate disruptions

### **Why the Scheme is Timely and Transformative**

#### **Economic Growth Multiplier:**

- R&D investment is positively correlated with productivity, exports, and job creation. Innovation propels nations into high-value manufacturing and services.

#### **Strategic Independence:**

- As global tech wars intensify, India's self-reliance in critical tech becomes not just economic but geopolitical.

#### **Global Leadership Potential:**

- India's ability to lead on climate resilience, AI ethics, and pandemic preparedness depends on domestic innovation.

#### **Start-up Empowerment:**

- Many Indian start-ups operate in tech-intensive fields but lack R&D capital. This scheme offers concessional financing and IP support, unlocking their potential.

### **Structural Hurdles in India's Innovation Ecosystem**

Despite policy intent, several barriers continue to restrain India's R&D output:

- **Human Capital Shortfall:** <200 researchers per million population (vs. 1,300+ in OECD countries)
- **Brain Drain:** Young researchers often leave due to better infrastructure, pay, and career opportunities abroad
- **Weak Industry-Academia Linkages:** Only a fraction of research projects involve corporate or field application tie-ups
- **IP Ecosystem Gaps:** Long patent processing times, poor IP enforcement, and limited public awareness hinder innovation protection
- **Low Risk Appetite in Industry:** Most firms prioritize short-term gains over long-horizon R&D with uncertain returns

### **Way Forward: From Scheme to Systemic Change**

#### **1. Education and Talent Pipeline**

- Introduce design thinking and innovation labs in schools
- Strengthen PhD fellowships and postdoctoral funding
- Foster interdisciplinary research in universities

#### **2. Infrastructure and Ecosystem Development**

- Set up CoEs (Centres of Excellence) in emerging technologies
- Build cluster-based innovation zones near academic and industrial hubs
- Enable public access to research infrastructure (labs, simulators, testing grounds)

#### **3. Bridging the Lab-Market Divide**

- Mandate industry-academia co-investment in R&D
- Facilitate shared innovation platforms with IP-sharing agreements
- Offer R&D mentorship programmes for MSMEs and early-stage innovators

#### **4. Institutional Reforms**

- Launch a National R&D Mission with monitoring under NITI Aayog
- Provide weighted tax deductions for private R&D
- Create a Research Performance Index to rank institutions on innovation outputs

### **Conclusion: The RDI Scheme as a National Innovation Compact**

- The RDI Scheme isn't just a funding tool, it's a strategic shift in India's innovation mindset. By placing the private sector at the centre of its R&D strategy, the government acknowledges that no nation can innovate at scale without market alignment.
- As India races toward 2047, the success of this scheme will depend not only on the money spent but on the ecosystems built, institutions reformed, and ideas unleashed.
- If executed with foresight and commitment, the RDI Scheme could be India's gateway to technological self-determination and global leadership in science and innovation.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Bridging the Infrastructure and Governance Gap for a Sustainable Urban Future

*General Studies-1; Topic: Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.*

### **Introduction: Urban Surge, National Opportunity**

- India is undergoing one of the fastest urban transitions in the world. Its urban population is projected to double from 400 million to 800 million in the next three decades.
- This demographic shift carries transformative potential for the economy, innovation, and global integration.
- However, it also poses unprecedented challenges for infrastructure, governance, and financial sustainability.
- A World Bank report estimates that bridging the urban infrastructure gap will require over ₹70 lakh crore by 2036, a scale far beyond current investment patterns.
- Without systemic reforms, India's cities risk becoming congested, exclusionary, and climate-vulnerable spaces rather than engines of prosperity.

### **Urban Infrastructure: A Deep and Persistent Financial Deficit**

1. Investment Gaps and Fiscal Shortfalls
  - In 2018, actual annual investment stood at only ₹1.3 lakh crore, falling significantly short of the estimated ₹4.6 lakh crore required.
  - Nearly half of the ₹70 lakh crore future demand is tied to basic urban services (water, waste, sanitation), with the rest focused on urban mobility and transit systems.
2. Fragile Municipal Finances
  - Municipal finances have remained stagnant at 1% of GDP for over two decades.
  - While the share of state and central transfers to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) has increased (from 37% to 44%), own-source revenue remains weak.
  - Property tax collection is a meagre 0.15% of GDP, far below potential.
  - Cost recovery for essential services like water and waste remains at 20–50%, reflecting inefficiencies and poor pricing structures.
3. Underutilized Resources and Declining Private Participation
  - Capital budgets remain underutilized; cities like Hyderabad and Chennai used only ~50% of allocated capital in FY2018–19.
  - Flagship missions like AMRUT and Smart Cities have seen utilization rates of only 70–80%.
  - Public-Private Partnership (PPP) investment in urban infrastructure collapsed from ₹8,353 crore (2012) to ₹467 crore (2018) due to project viability concerns and absence of risk mitigation tools.

### **Structural and Governance Bottlenecks in Urban Management**

1. Weak Urban Governance Architecture
  - ULBs suffer from limited financial and administrative autonomy, inadequate planning capacity, and politically weak leadership.
  - Mayoral systems remain largely ceremonial, diluting accountability and long-term urban vision.
2. Institutional Fragmentation and Poor Coordination
  - Multiple agencies with overlapping roles in municipal bodies, state parastatals, and development authorities lead to confusion and project delays.
3. Unplanned Urban Growth and Climate Vulnerability
  - Rapid, unregulated expansion has led to urban sprawl, poor connectivity, and informal settlements.
  - Climate risks, floods, heatwaves, rising sea levels are not yet embedded in urban development strategies, risking long-term infrastructure losses.
4. Missed Land Value Capture Opportunities
  - Land-use policies are poorly aligned with infrastructure expansion.
  - Valuable tools like Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and land pooling remain underleveraged for revenue generation and sustainable urban growth.

### **Unlocking Urban Potential: What Needs to Change**

1. Cities as Economic Powerhouses
  - Urban centres contribute over 60% of India's GDP, and this share is set to rise.
  - A well-functioning urban ecosystem can unlock opportunities in manufacturing, services, technology, and green innovation.
2. Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as a Lever
  - DPI can modernize service delivery and improve efficiency:
    - Smart metering can increase revenue collection.
    - Integrated urban mobility apps can reduce congestion.
    - GIS-based planning can support evidence-based governance.
3. Monetizing Land Intelligently
  - Cities can self-finance a significant portion of their growth by unlocking land value through TOD, integrated metro planning, and strategic zoning.

### **Reforms Across Time Horizons: A Phased Policy Approach**

#### **Short-Term Priorities (1–3 years)**

- 1) Enhance Revenue Mobilization:
  - Modernize property tax systems using digital cadastre and GIS mapping.
  - Introduce rational user fees for core urban services.
- 2) Strengthen Fund Utilization:
  - Build technical capacity in ULBs for project execution.
  - Link intergovernmental transfers to performance indicators.

#### **Medium-Term Goals (3–7 years)**

- 1) Revitalize PPP Frameworks:
  - Provide Viability Gap Funding (VGF) and risk-sharing instruments.
  - Build a pipeline of bankable projects to attract private capital.
- 2) Build Project Preparation Capacity:
  - Establish project preparation cells at state and city levels.
  - Ensure sustainability screening across social, environmental, and financial dimensions.
- 3) Drive Innovation and Collaboration:
  - Set up urban innovation labs in collaboration with academia and industry.
  - Pilot smart solutions (e.g., e-waste recycling, air quality monitoring).

#### **Long-Term Structural Changes (7+ years)**

- 1) Empower Urban Local Bodies:
  - Revamp State Finance Commissions to ensure fair and predictable transfers.
  - Enable ULBs to issue municipal bonds with credit enhancement.
- 2) Integrated Urban Planning:
  - Align housing, transport, and land-use under a unified metropolitan planning framework.
  - Mainstream climate resilience and disaster risk reduction into all infrastructure plans.
- 3) Invest in Human Capital and Governance:
  - Train municipal staff in urban finance, climate planning, digital tech, and data governance.
  - Build institutional memory through long-term cadres and knowledge systems.

### **Conclusion: Reforming Today to Build the Cities of Tomorrow**

- India's urban transition represents both a national challenge and a generational opportunity. If managed with vision and urgency, cities can emerge as engines of sustainable growth, job creation, and social inclusion.
- But to get there, we must move beyond ad hoc schemes and fragmented projects. The path forward lies in strengthening municipal finances, professionalizing governance, and planning for people not just infrastructure.
- By bridging the gaps in investment, governance, and climate resilience, India can build urban spaces that are not only livable and inclusive but also resilient, digitally empowered, and globally competitive.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Democratizing AI in the Age of Big Tech Domination

*GS-3 (Developments in science and technology, IT, AI, and their application in governance)*

*Subject: Science & Technology*

### Introduction

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing our lives. It helps us search the internet, watch videos, get medical advice, talk to chatbots, and even drive cars. But while AI is becoming smarter and more useful, it's also raising serious questions.

### One big concern is this: Who controls AI?

- Right now, the answer is clear—a few big tech companies. Whether it's Google, Amazon, Meta (Facebook), Microsoft, or OpenAI, the power to build, train, and sell advanced AI lies mostly in the hands of a small number of giant corporations. These companies have massive amounts of money, data, and computing power. That gives them an unfair advantage—and a lot of control over what AI does and how it affects society.
- The problem is that these companies are not chosen by the public. They are private, profit-driven businesses. But they are making decisions that affect billions of people, and even entire governments. This is where the danger begins.

### AI is Everywhere—But Not for Everyone

- AI is already shaping education, healthcare, finance, hiring, and even law enforcement. But while the benefits of AI are being promoted loudly, they are not equally shared.
- Rich companies and countries have the resources to use AI to grow their economies and strengthen their control. But poorer communities and developing countries often get left behind. They don't have the money, skills, or infrastructure to develop their own AI or to protect themselves from its harms.
- Even in wealthier countries, AI doesn't treat everyone equally. AI tools have been found to show racial and gender bias, especially in hiring and facial recognition. This is because AI learns from data—and if the data is unfair, the results are unfair too.
- Worse still, many AI systems are not transparent. We don't always know how they make decisions. That means people can be judged, rejected, or punished by a machine—with no chance to understand or challenge it.

### Big Tech and the Race for Control

- In the global AI race, Big Tech is winning—and they are setting the rules.
- These companies collect enormous amounts of data every day from people around the world. They use this data to train AI models, improve their services, and make more money. In return, we get free tools like search engines, chatbots, and voice assistants. But at what cost?
- We, the users, become the product. Our choices, behaviours, and habits are tracked, analysed, and sold. This kind of AI is not neutral—it is built to serve business goals, not public interest.

- Governments are struggling to keep up. Laws are slow. Regulations are weak. And in many places, politicians depend on these very companies for advice, donations, or tech support. That makes it even harder to stop the growing influence of Big Tech.

### What Does It Mean to “Democratize” AI?

To democratize AI means giving more people a say in how AI is developed, used, and governed. It means:

- Making AI tools open and accessible—not just for big companies, but also for small developers, public institutions, and everyday citizens.
- Creating strong laws and rules to prevent misuse of AI and protect people's rights.
- Supporting local and community-driven AI projects that solve real-life problems like farming, health, or education.
- Building AI that reflects diverse cultures, languages, and values—not just Western or corporate interests.
- Teaching people digital skills so they can understand, question, and participate in the AI future.

In short, democratizing AI is about putting people—not profits—at the centre of technology.

### The Role of Governments and Citizens

- Governments have a big responsibility. They must stop letting Big Tech dominate the future of AI. That means investing in public AI research, building strong laws to protect users, and ensuring companies are held accountable when things go wrong.

But citizens also have a role to play. We need to:

- Be aware of how AI affects our lives.
- Question what data we give away.
- Support open-source, ethical AI projects.
- Demand transparency from tech companies.
- Push our leaders to act.
- Democracy is not just about voting every five years. It's also about having a voice in how technology shapes our future.

### Conclusion

- AI has the power to do great good. It can help solve climate change, cure diseases, improve learning, and connect people across the world. But only if it is used wisely and fairly.
- Right now, AI is being built and controlled by a small group of powerful companies. If we don't act, they will continue to dominate our digital lives. But if we work together—as citizens, governments, and communities—we can create an AI future that is open, fair, and democratic.
- AI should not be a tool of control. It should be a tool of empowerment.
- Let's make sure AI works for everyone—not just the few who own it.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## India's Foundational Learning Crisis

*General Studies-2/3; Topic: Issues relating to education, human resources, skill development, Social sector services; Subject: Education & Human Resource Development.*

### Introduction

- The PARAKH survey is one of the biggest education studies done in India. It covered over 21 lakh students from classes 3, 6, and 9 in more than 74,000 schools across every state and union territory.

Here are some of the worrying findings:

#### 1. Class 3 students:

- Only 55% could arrange numbers from 1 to 99 in the right order.
- Just 58% could do simple two-digit addition or subtraction.
- These are very basic skills children should master by class 3—but nearly half of them haven't.

#### 2. Class 6 students:

- 54% couldn't understand or compare big numbers.
- 43% couldn't understand what they were reading.
- Over 50% didn't know simple geography like rivers or mountains.

This means students are moving to higher classes without fully understanding what they've already studied. That's dangerous for their future.

### UNESCO's Observations: Even More Alarming

UNESCO's 2025 progress report on education added more shocking details:

- 21% of youth aged 15–17 are out of school. That's 1 in every 5 children in that age group.
- 60% of students are under-performing in important subjects.
- There are still big gaps between rural and urban students, and between boys and girls.

In simple terms, many of our children are falling behind and dropping out before they've even finished school.

### Why Is This Happening?

#### 1. Not Enough Money for Education

- India spends only 4.3% of its GDP on education—way below the NEP 2020 target of 6%.
- This means schools don't have enough resources—no proper buildings, libraries, or teaching materials.

#### 2. Too Few Teachers

- More than 10% of schools are run by only one teacher.
- Many teachers are not trained properly and don't get the support they need.

#### 3. Poor Monitoring

- There is no strong system to regularly check if students are learning or not.
- Without regular testing and feedback, schools don't know where students are struggling.

#### 4. Social Inequality

- Girls, children from tribal and rural areas, and students with disabilities still face discrimination and neglect.
- Many families can't afford to send their children to school every day.

### What This Means for India's Future

- This learning crisis doesn't just affect children—it affects our entire society.
- A semi-literate population won't be ready for modern jobs.
- Government programs like Skill India and Digital India won't succeed if the future workforce doesn't have basic skills.
- The gap between rich and poor will widen, as children from weaker sections fall further behind.
- Poverty will continue to pass from one generation to the next.

### What Needs to Be Done – And Fast

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has great goals—but we are far behind on achieving them. If we want real change, we must act now:

#### 1. Spend More on Education

- Increase public spending to at least 6% of GDP, as promised.
- Prioritize basic facilities and digital tools in schools.

#### 2. Train and Support Teachers

- Teachers are the backbone of education.
- They need proper training, support, and respect to teach better.

#### 3. Regular Monitoring and Evaluation

- Tools like PARAKH and NAS should be used regularly to track progress.
- Schools and teachers should be rewarded for improving learning outcomes.

#### 4. Focus on Inclusion

- Pay special attention to girls, tribal students, children with disabilities, and those from poor families.
- Expand support schemes like Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas for girls.

#### 5. Empower Local Committees

- School Management Committees (SMCs) should be given more power to manage budgets and check school performance.

### Conclusion

India is dreaming of becoming a global leader. But no country can grow if its children are not learning. This crisis is not just about education—it's about justice, equality, and the future of our nation. We must stop treating education as just another government scheme. It's time to treat it as a national emergency. Our children deserve better. They deserve classrooms with good teachers, books, electricity, playgrounds, and a chance to dream big. Let's fix this crisis—not tomorrow, in today.



# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme

*General Studies-3; Topic: Inclusive growth, government schemes for employment, industrial policy; Subject: Economy – Government Schemes & Employment Generation.*

### Introduction

India is a young country. Every year, millions of young people finish school or college, hoping to get a good job. But finding the right job is not always easy. Many are struggling to find work, even after getting degrees or skills.

This is one of India's biggest problems today — unemployment.

To help solve this, the government has started a special scheme called the Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme. The aim of this scheme is simple: to encourage companies to give more jobs to people.

### What Is the ELI Scheme?

- The ELI Scheme is like a reward system for businesses. If a company gives jobs to more people, the government will give financial help or benefits to that company. It's the government's way of saying — "Thank you for hiring more Indians."

What the scheme does:

- Gives incentives (money or tax benefits) to companies for hiring new employees
- Focuses on creating formal jobs — with salary, PF (Provident Fund), insurance, and job security
- Supports industries like textiles, electronics, tourism, retail, and others that can hire a large number of people

### Why Do We Need Such a Scheme?

India needs this scheme because:

- Unemployment is high, especially among young people
- Many jobs in India are informal, without proper pay or benefits
- Small businesses want to grow, but they need support
- Government wants to make "Make in India" and "Skill India" successful
- The ELI Scheme gives motivation to companies to hire more people and grow their workforce.

### How Does the Scheme Work?

It works in a simple way:

- A company hires new workers.
- It shows the government that it has increased its number of employees.
- The government checks and then gives some incentive or benefit to the company.
- The more new workers a company hires, the more support it gets.

These workers must be formally employed (registered under EPFO or ESIC), and they must get minimum wages and social security.

### How Will This Help Common People?

This scheme is good news for job seekers — especially freshers, women, and youth from small towns. It means:

- More job openings

- More safe and secure jobs (with salary, PF, and health insurance)
- More dignity and confidence for workers
- It also helps small industries, which often need just a little push to grow and hire more people.

### What Are the Early Results?

Some early outcomes show promise:

- In industries like textiles and electronics, companies have hired more because they got help from the government.
- In places like Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, the scheme has helped youth get formal jobs.
- Many businesses are registering more employees under EPFO, helping bring informal workers into the formal system.

### Challenges to the Scheme

Like every scheme, the ELI also faces some difficulties:

1. **Lack of awareness:** Many small companies don't even know this scheme exists.
2. **Fake job entries:** Some companies might try to misuse the scheme.
3. **Skill gap:** Jobs are available, but people also need to have the right skills.
4. **Uneven reach:** Bigger companies may benefit more, while smaller ones get left behind.

### What Can Be Done to Improve It?

To make ELI more successful, here are a few ideas:

- **Spread awareness:** Conduct workshops and campaigns to inform businesses about the scheme.
- **Connect with Skill India:** Link job creation with skill training, so youth are job-ready.
- **Extra support for women and youth:** Offer bonus incentives to companies hiring first-time job seekers, women, and people from rural areas.
- **Strict monitoring:** Make sure companies follow the rules and don't misuse the scheme.

### Conclusion: Jobs Bring Hope

The Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme is a step in the right direction. It shows that the government understands how important jobs are — not just for the economy, but for the dreams of ordinary Indians.

When a young person gets their first job, it's not just money. It's pride, independence, and a better future.

If we support companies that hire more people — fairly and formally — we can build a stronger India where every hand finds work and every heart finds hope.

# EDITORIAL SECTION



## Asia's Escalating Climate Crisis

*General Studies-3; Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution, climate change, disaster management); Subject: Environment & Ecology.*

### Introduction

- Asia, the continent where most of the world's people live, is going through serious climate problems. Every year, we're seeing more heatwaves, floods, storms, and rising sea levels. It's not something that might happen in the future — it's already happening.
- Countries like India, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, and the Philippines are getting hit the hardest. And the people suffering the most are often the poorest, who did the least to cause the problem.

### What's Going Wrong?

Here are some real examples:

- In India, summers are becoming dangerously hot. In some places, it goes above 50°C. People get sick, crops dry up, and children can't go to school.
- Floods are happening more often in places like China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. They destroy homes and farms.
- Storms and cyclones are stronger and more damaging than before, especially in coastal areas.
- In the Himalayas, glaciers are melting faster. This puts rivers and water sources at risk.
- Sea levels are rising, which is a big threat to cities like Mumbai, Jakarta, and Bangkok. Even small islands like Maldives may disappear one day.

### Who Is Suffering the Most?

Not everyone is affected equally. The worst impact is on:

- Poor families: They often live in weak houses and don't have savings to recover after floods or storms.
- Farmers and fishermen: They depend on nature. When rains fail or oceans warm up, they lose their work.
- Women and children: They face more danger during disasters and often miss out on school or healthcare.
- People living near rivers, coasts, or forests: Their homes are under threat.

### Why Is Asia Struggling?

Here are some reasons:

- Many Asian countries still use coal and oil for electricity, which adds to global warming.
- Cities are growing fast, but planning is poor. Drainage systems are weak, and buildings are built in risky areas.
- There are too many people in small spaces, especially in slums and crowded towns.
- Governments are slow to respond, and climate laws are not always followed properly.

### What Are Countries Doing?

Some good steps are being taken:

- India is focusing more on solar energy and aiming for Net Zero by 2070.
- China has promised to cut emissions and use more green technology.
- Countries in Southeast Asia are trying to improve disaster warnings and plant more trees.
- But the truth is, these steps are too slow, and the climate problem is growing fast.

### What Needs to Be Done Right Now?

Here's what Asian countries need to do urgently:

1. Use Cleaner Energy
  - Switch to solar, wind, and water power instead of coal.
2. Prepare for Disasters
  - Build stronger houses, better roads, and warning systems so people are safe when storms or floods happen.
3. Protect Nature
  - Stop cutting forests and save rivers, lakes, and mountains.
4. Educate People
  - Teach children and communities about climate change and how to stay safe.
5. Ask Rich Countries to Help
  - We need global cooperation. Rich countries must share money and technology to help Asia fight climate change.

### Why It Matters for Everyone

Asia is important for the whole world. It:

- Feeds billions of people
- Makes goods for global markets
- Has more than half of the planet's population

If Asia suffers, the whole world will feel the pain—through food shortages, migration, and rising costs. But if Asia takes action, it can lead the world to a safer, cleaner future.

### Conclusion

- The climate crisis is no longer about the future. It's already changing lives across Asia—destroying homes, hurting families, and threatening our future.
- We still have time to fix it, but the clock is ticking. Governments, businesses, and ordinary people must work together to protect our environment.
- Because when we protect nature, we protect ourselves.





# Editorial Board

SESSION 2025 - 2026



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MR. VIMLOK TIWARI (CONVENOR)**

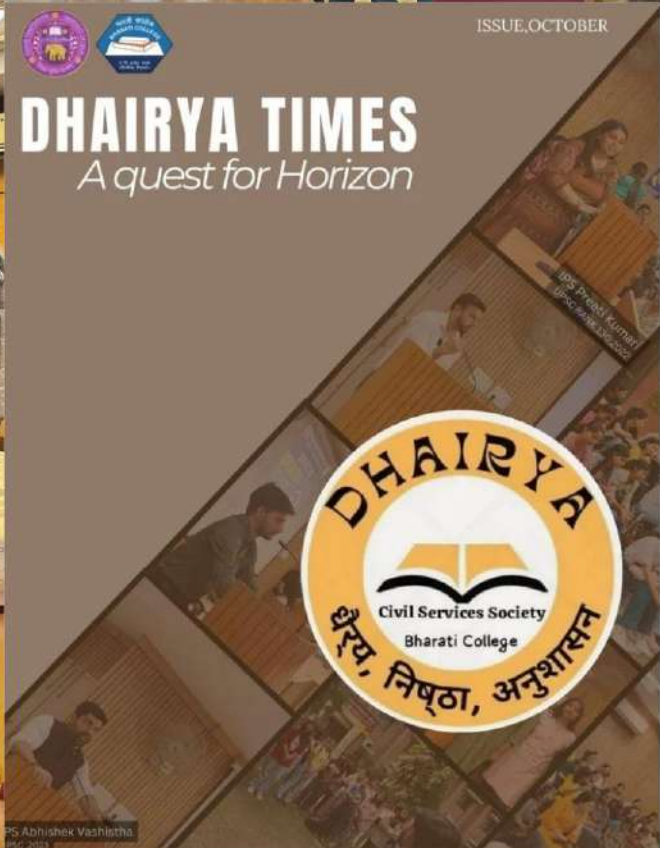
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**It is both a proud and nostalgic moment to see Dhairya complete two remarkable years and its signature project, 'Dhairya Times', ready with a new edition. Since its inception, Dhairya Times has been more than a magazine. It is a space to share ideas, exchange knowledge, and inspire thought. Every edition reflects the hard work and vision of our members, and this one is no different.**

**For me Serving as Convenor has been one of the most rewarding chapters of my life, filled with learning, challenges, and the joy of creating something meaningful with a dedicated team. As I now step away from academia to join the civil services, I am deeply grateful to every member, contributor, and reader who believed in this initiative and helped it flourish.**

**I warmly welcome the new batch of aspirants joining the Dhairya family and hope you find here the same purpose, learning, and camaraderie that have guided us from the very beginning.**

**Keep Learning and Keep Shining ✨  
Best Wishes.**

**Vimlok Tiwari**  
**Convenor, Dhairya: The Civil Service Society**

