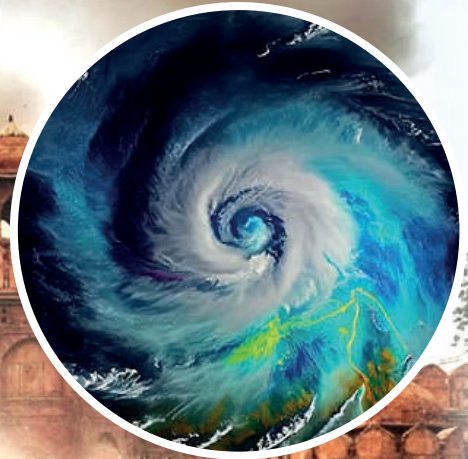


NOVEMBER 2025

# BELIEVERS MANTRA



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# GENERAL STUDIES - I

- 1. Art And Culture**
- 2. Modern History**
- 3. World History**
- 4. Indian Society**
- 5. Geography**

## Himachal Pradesh Landslide Tragedy

### Location & Timing

- Occurred near **Bhallu bridge, Bhalughat area, Bilaspur district**, Himachal Pradesh.
- **Time:** Around **6:30 p.m.**, Tuesday.
- Triggered by a **massive landslide** due to continuous rains.

### Casualties

- **15 dead**, several others trapped.
- **Bus** with about **30 passengers** crushed by falling boulders.
- **Three children rescued alive** and hospitalized.

### Rescue & Response

- **District administration** launched immediate rescue operations.
- **CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** directed full deployment of resources.
- **PM Modi** announced **₹1 lakh** for families of deceased and **₹50,000** for injured.

### Probable Cause

- **Intermittent heavy rainfall since Oct 6** loosened soil and rocks.
- Typical of **monsoon-related slope failures** in the Himalayan region.

### Landslides

#### Definition

- Downward movement of **rock, soil, and debris** under **gravity**, often triggered by natural or human causes.

#### Main Causes

- **Heavy rainfall, earthquakes, deforestation, road cutting, mining.**

### Impacts

- **Loss of life, infrastructure damage, road blockages, economic disruption.**

### Mitigation

- **Hazard mapping, early warning systems, afforestation, regulated construction, drainage control.**

### Fact

- **NDMA** is the nodal agency; major initiative: **Landslide Risk Mitigation Project (LRMP).**

## Cyclone Montha Set to Cross Andhra Coast: Red Alert in 16 Districts

### Context:

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert for 16 districts of Andhra Pradesh as Cyclone Montha is expected to make landfall near Kakinada on Tuesday evening or night as a severe cyclonic storm.

### Meteorological Details

- Type: Severe Cyclonic Storm (as per IMD classification)
- Wind Speed: 90–100 kmph (gusts up to 110 kmph)
- Trajectory: Moving north-northwestwards, likely to cross coast between Machilipatnam and Kalingapatnam around Kakinada.

### Impact and Rainfall

- Heavy to extremely heavy rainfall recorded in northern coastal districts.
  - Visakhapatnam District: Jathara (92 mm), Madhurawada (86 mm), Kapuluppada (85 mm)
  - Anakapalli District: Sabbavaram (67 mm), Rajam (62 mm)
- High Waves: 2.0 – 4.7 metres (forecast by INCOIS)
- Storm Surge: ~1 metre above astronomical tide — likely to inundate low-lying areas.

## Alerts and Preparedness

Alert Type      Districts Covered

● **Red Alert**    16 districts including Kakinada, Krishna, Guntur, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, West Godavari, etc.

● **Orange Alert**      5 districts

○ **Excluded**    SPSR Nellore and 8 Rayalaseema districts

- Vulnerability: Andhra Pradesh's long coastline (~972 km) makes it highly prone to tropical cyclones.
- Preparedness Strategy: Reflects India's evolving multi-agency disaster response framework under the NDMA (2005) and Sendai Framework (2015–2030) principles.

## Government Action

**Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's directives:**

- Real-time monitoring: Hourly bulletins and updates.
- Emergency Communication: Deployment of satellite phones and extra mobile towers.
- Power Backup: 3,211 generators readied across 110 mandals (covering 2,707 villages).
- Rescue Forces: NDRF and SDRF on standby.
- Infrastructure Preparedness: Quick restoration of roads, power, and sanitation post-cyclone.
- Health Measures: 108 & 104 emergency vehicles, with focus on maternal health.
- Evacuations: Residents in vulnerable coastal belts being shifted to rehabilitation centres.
- Centre's Support: PM Modi has assured all possible assistance.

## Institutional Coordination

- IMD: Real-time tracking and intensity forecasts.
- INCOIS: Oceanic wave and storm surge alerts.
- State Disaster Management Authority: Coordination across departments for mitigation and relief.

## Analytical Insight

- Pattern: Cyclone Montha forms part of the post-monsoon Bay of Bengal cyclonic activity, similar to previous systems like Titli (2018) and Fani (2019).

## Tagore, Bankim, and an Exercise in Futility

### Theme:

Political appropriation of cultural icons in Bengal — and how it reflects deeper **fault lines in Indian identity politics**.

### Context

- A cultural–political controversy has emerged in **West Bengal** involving **Rabindranath Tagore** (author of *Jana Gana Mana*) and **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay** (composer of *Vande Mataram*).
- Both are pillars of **Bengal's literary and nationalist heritage**, yet their legacies are being politicised.

## Recent Developments

### State Government's Move

- In November 2025, the **West Bengal government** mandated that Tagore's *Banglar Maati Bangla Jol* be sung in all State-run schools during morning assemblies.
- This follows the **2023 notification declaring it the State anthem**.

### Centre's Commemoration

- Around the same time, the **Central government** organised celebrations

marking **150 years of *Vande Mataram***.

- The **BJP** used the occasion to highlight neglect of Chattopadhyay’s legacy and questioned the timing of the State’s decision.

### Political Back-and-Forth

- **BJP leaders** alleged the State was sidelining *Vande Mataram*.
- **Trinamool Congress (TMC)** accused BJP of “disrespecting Tagore,” after BJP MP **Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri** called *Jana Gana Mana* a song “to welcome British officials.”
- TMC protested at **Jorasanko Thakurbari**, Tagore’s ancestral home

### Polarisation Beyond Bengal

- In **Assam**, a Congress leader was booked for singing Tagore’s *Amar Sonar Bangla* — the national anthem of **Bangladesh** — triggering protests in Kolkata.
- Civil society members, intellectuals, and artists responded by **singing Tagore’s songs in solidarity**, framing it as a protest against cultural intolerance.

### Deeper Political Undercurrents

- The **Tagore vs. Bankim** debate, once confined to fringe groups, has been **mainstreamed ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections**.
- Tagore’s universalism and humanism are now **identified with TMC’s Bengal sub-nationalism**, while Bankim’s *Vande Mataram* is **appropriated as a nationalist–Hindutva symbol** by the BJP.
- This reflects an **attempt to localise national identity politics** through cultural figures.

### Historical Irony

- Both poets were **mutually respectful**, not rivals:
  - In **1882**, Bankim **garlanded Tagore**, calling him “an elegant poet of the new age.”
  - In **1896**, Tagore himself **sang *Vande Mataram*** at the Congress session in Kolkata.
- Thus, their works are **complementary, not competitive**, both rooted in **patriotism and national awakening**

### Analysis: Politics of Cultural Appropriation

Aspect	Observation	Implication
<b>Cultural Capital</b>	Parties invoke icons to gain symbolic legitimacy.	Dilutes their original humanistic message.
<b>Identity Politics</b>	Tagore framed as liberal–cosmopolitan, Bankim as nationalist–religious.	Deepens communal and ideological fault lines.
<b>Electoral Symbolism</b>	Cultural heritage becomes a political tool.	Diverts attention from governance and socio-economic issues.

### Broader Reflection

- Cultural icons like Tagore and Bankim **belong to all Indians**,

- transcending party lines or religious identities.
- Pitting one against another **betrays a narrow view of Indian pluralism** and reduces rich intellectual legacies to partisan slogans.
  - The **National Anthem vs. National Song** debate is an **exercise in futility** — both express India's soul through different idioms of devotion and unity.

## Key Takeaways

1. **Cultural appropriation** corrodes the inclusive spirit of India's freedom movement.
2. Political discourse must **celebrate multiplicity**, not force binaries.
3. Scholars and citizens alike must resist **polarising reinterpretations** of shared heritage.
4. India's strength lies in **synthesis, not separation** — Tagore's "Ekla Chalo Re" and Bankim's "Vande Mataram" both arise from love for *Maa Bharati*.

## Conclusion

"Comparing *Jana Gana Mana* with *Vande Mataram* is not only futile — it reflects a narrow understanding of India's history."

Politicians may not transcend politics, but they can at least exercise prudence. In a nation already marked by polarization, **pitting poets against each other diminishes both culture and democracy.** India's true homage to Tagore and Bankim lies in **honouring all its icons equally — beyond partisanship.**

# GENERAL STUDIES - II

- 1. Constitution**
- 2. Polity**
- 3. Governance**
- 4. Social Justice**
- 5. International Relations**

## Attack on CJI Gavai and the Challenge to Judicial Independence

### The Incident

- Advocate **Rakesh Kishore** threw papers and allegedly attempted to hurl shoes at **CJI B.R. Gavai's Bench** during court proceedings.
- He shouted slogans linked to "Sanatana"; the act is seen as fallout of **misinterpreted remarks** by the CJI in the *Vishnu Idol Restoration* case.

### CJI's Response and Institutional Action

- **CJI remained composed**, continuing proceedings with dignity.
- The **Bar Council of India** swiftly **suspended the advocate** under the *Advocates Act, 1961*.
- The **Supreme Court Bar Association** called it a **direct attack on judicial independence**.

### Constitutional Dimensions

- **Judicial independence** is part of the **Basic Structure** (*Kesavananda Bharati*, 1973).
- Violates **Article 50** (separation of powers) and **Preamble values** of secularism and justice.
- Undermines the **Rule of Law** and public trust in institutions.

### Political and Ethical Concerns

- Leaders across parties condemned the act as **fanatical and intolerant**.
- Reflects **declining civic morality and professional ethics**.
- As **Ambedkar** warned, "Constitutional morality must be cultivated."

### Broader Implications

- Symbolic of **ideological polarisation** and **erosion of respect for judiciary**.
- Calls for reinforcing **judicial dignity, legal ethics, and civic tolerance** to uphold the Constitution.

### Criticism of the Indian Judiciary

- Public discourse in India increasingly targets the judiciary as a barrier to rapid economic development.
- Sanjeev Sanyal, member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, labeled the judicial system as the "single biggest hurdle" to India becoming a **Viksit Bharat** within 20–25 years.
- The article, written by Suhrith Parthasarathy, challenges this characterization and examines the roots of judicial criticism.

### Misplaced Criticism

- Critics often reduce the judiciary to a **caricature**, pointing to vacations, short working hours, and delays.
- Such critiques ignore the **complexities of judicial work**:
  - Judges handle 50–100 cases per day, requiring significant preparation, research, drafting, and consideration of precedent.
  - Much of this work occurs behind the scenes, often outside official hours.
- Judicial vacations serve to allow judges to complete reserved judgments; removing structured breaks could undermine justice.

### Root Causes of Delays

- Many delays are **structural** rather than individual failings:

- Laws are poorly drafted, vague, and outdated, often inherited from colonial times.
- Government departments, the largest litigants, often file unnecessary lawsuits or appeals.
- Lower judiciary, which handles most citizen disputes, is overburdened with vacancies and outdated infrastructure.

**government litigation practices, and resource constraints**, rather than scapegoating judges

## Reforming Passive Euthanasia in India

### Context

- The U.K. recently passed the **Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill**, allowing physician-assisted dying under strict conditions.
- India recognises **passive euthanasia** through Supreme Court judgments but **prohibits active euthanasia**.
- Cultural values, socio-economic conditions, and institutional limitations make the Indian approach more cautious than Western models.

### Examples

- **Section 12A of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015**: Mandatory pre-suit mediation often fails, not due to judicial incompetence but because of poor legislative drafting.
- **Income-Tax Act reforms**: Changes in legal terminology (e.g., replacing “notwithstanding” with “irrespective”) create confusion rather than clarity.

### The Real Picture

- The judiciary mirrors failures in governance, legislation, and administrative practices.
- Courts are **independent checks** on executive power; weakening them risks undermining constitutional democracy.
- Reform is needed, but critiques should focus on **structural issues** rather than superficial targets like vacations or visible court hours.

### Conclusion

- India’s judicial system faces genuine challenges: delays, outdated infrastructure, and weak accountability.
- However, labeling it as the “biggest hurdle” to development is **misleading and counterproductive**.
- Meaningful reform requires addressing **legislative imprecision**,

### Challenges in India

- **Procedural complexity**: Legal recognition exists, but advance directives, dual medical board approvals, and judicial oversight make implementation slow.
- **Practical inaccessibility**: Terminally ill patients and families face delays, forcing informal and sometimes legally risky decisions.
- **Healthcare limitations**: Fragmented and under-resourced system, lack of universal palliative care, and high treatment costs complicate end-of-life decisions.
- **Ethical concerns**: Active euthanasia could pressure vulnerable populations (elderly, disabled, financially dependent) to opt for death.
- **Jurisprudential caution**: Article 21 guarantees the right to life and

dignity, but the Supreme Court maintains a distinction between **allowing death** and **causing death**.

## Proposed Reforms for Passive Euthanasia

### Digital tools & national portal:

- Advance directives registered online, linked with Aadhaar for verification.
- Patients can create, update, or revoke directives easily.

### Hospital ethics committees:

- Include senior doctors, palliative care specialists, and neutral third parties.
- Authorise withdrawal of life support within 48 hours; exceptional cases flagged for further review.

### Oversight mechanism:

- Avoid cumbersome state-level ombudsmen.
- Use decentralised hospital-based review and digital dashboards.
- Independent medical auditors or health commissioners with statutory backing may be alternatives.

### Safeguards:

- Seven-day cooling-off period.
- Psychological counselling and palliative care review.
- Prevent misuse and ensure informed decisions, especially for vulnerable populations.

### Awareness & medical education:

- Integrate end-of-life care, ethics, and legal training in medical curricula.
- Public campaigns to normalise advance care planning and decision-making.

## Way Forward

- India should **refine passive euthanasia procedures** rather than adopt active euthanasia.
- Digitally-driven, hospital-centric, and transparent processes can make end-of-life decisions **efficient, humane, and legally safe**.
- Ensures **patient empowerment**, respects Indian cultural values, and safeguards against exploitation.
- Aligns with the constitutional promise of **dignity in dying**

## U.S. Visa Policy and STEM Talent Outflow

### Rising Visa Costs

- The U.S. recently introduced a **\$100,000 visa fee** for new H-1B workers.
- This move is **especially harmful to Indian professionals**, who form the majority of H-1B holders.
- Critics argue that this could drive away the very **STEM talent** that powers the U.S. tech sector.

### Growth in U.S. STEM Jobs

- **IT sector jobs** grew by **~40% between 2016–2024**, among the fastest in the economy.
- **Healthcare support** and **scientific research roles** are the only other sectors with comparable growth.
- Around **25% of the IT and healthcare workforce** is foreign-born — a figure **unchanged since 2016**, indicating stagnation in foreign talent share.

## Dependence on Foreign STEM Talent

## India–U.K. Trade Pact: A Launchpad for Growth

- Major U.S. tech firms like **Apple, Microsoft, and Meta** now dominate H-1B recruitment — not just Indian IT companies.
- STEM occupations are projected to grow **8% in the next decade**, compared to **2.7% for non-STEM jobs**.
- The **domestic STEM talent pipeline** is insufficient to meet rising demand.

### Declining Interest Among U.S. Students

- Growth in STEM degrees (2011–2021):
  - **Non-residents:** +148%
  - **U.S. residents:** +47%
- At the Master’s level, **45% of STEM graduates are non-residents**, showing U.S. reliance on international students.

### Global Response and Competition

- **China:** Promoting a new ‘**K visa**’ as an H-1B alternative.
- **U.K.:** Considering **visa fee cuts** for STEM professionals.
- **Germany:** Publicly inviting Indian talent via diplomatic channels.
- **Japan and South Korea:** Exploring similar initiatives.

### The Bigger Question

- By **making it harder and costlier** for skilled migrants to work in the U.S., the country may be **weakening its own innovation base**.
- Competing nations are **actively attracting displaced STEM talent**, potentially shifting the global tech power balance

### Context

On his first visit to India as PM, **Keir Starmer** hailed the new **India–U.K. Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** as the “biggest deal since Brexit.” The pact, part of the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (Vision 2035)**, aims to boost cooperation in trade, technology, defence, energy, education, and people-to-people ties.

### Key Features of the FTA

- **Duty-free access** on **99.1% of U.K. tariff lines**, covering almost all trade immediately.
- Expected to raise **bilateral trade by £25.5 billion annually**.
- **Tariff cuts** on major products — textiles, whisky, and automobiles.
- Seen as a **post-Brexit opportunity** for the U.K. and a new export market for India.

### Business & Investment

- Starmer led a **100-member trade delegation** of business and university leaders.
- **Rolls-Royce** announced plans to expand manufacturing and R&D in India to support *Viksit Bharat 2047*.
- India’s **Piyush Goyal** met U.K. Business Secretary **Peter Kyle** to fast-track the pact’s operationalisation.

### Cultural Cooperation

- Starmer visited **Yash Raj Films Studios** in Mumbai; three Bollywood films will soon be shot in the U.K., highlighting growing creative-industry ties.

### Visa Issue

- Starmer clarified that **visa**

liberalisation is not part of the FTA, noting no change in current policies.

## Significance

- **For India:** New export access, technology inflow, and global trade leverage.
- **For the U.K.:** Expands markets beyond Europe and strengthens its Indo-Pacific presence.

## Conclusion

The India–U.K. trade pact is more than a deal — it’s a **strategic launchpad for shared economic growth**, deepening trust between two major democracies in a changing global order.

## The Danger of an Unchecked Pre-Crime Framework

## Context

The article critiques India’s **preventive detention regime**, arguing that it has drifted far from constitutional morality and the principles of liberty, fairness, and due process. It draws parallels with **Steven Spielberg’s “Minority Report”**, where people are punished for crimes not yet committed — mirroring how preventive detention undermines fundamental rights.

## Constitutional Background

- **Articles 22(3)–(7)** permit **preventive detention**, allowing imprisonment **without trial**, making it an **exception to Article 21** (Right to Life and Liberty).
- The author calls these provisions the *“Bermuda Triangle of India’s Constitution”* — where **liberty, equality, and due process vanish**.

- Though intended for extraordinary circumstances (e.g., wartime threats), these powers are now used routinely by states under broad laws like the **Kerala Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 2007 (KAAPA)**.

## Key Supreme Court Judgments

1. **Dhanya M. vs State of Kerala (2025):** SC struck down a detention under KAAPA, stating preventive detention must be **used sparingly** and not as a **substitute for prosecution or denial of bail**.
2. **S.K. Nazneen (2023)** – Preventive detention cannot be used for mere *law and order* issues; it applies only to *public order* threats.
3. **Rekha vs State of Tamil Nadu (2011)** – Preventive detention is an **exception to Article 21**, to be used **only in rare cases**.
4. **Banka Sneha Sheela (2021)** – Any detention must satisfy **Article 21’s due process** standards.

## Historical Lineage

- Originates from **British colonial laws** (Bengal Regulation, 1818).
- Retained post-Independence despite being a **colonial relic**.
- **A.K. Gopalan (1950):** SC upheld preventive detention, isolating **Article 22** from other fundamental rights.
- **Maneka Gandhi (1978):** Expanded Article 21 to include **fair and just procedure**, yet **A.K. Roy (1982)** later reaffirmed the earlier restrictive view, excluding preventive detention from Articles 14, 19, and 21 — creating a **constitutional contradiction**.

## The “Pre-Crime” Problem

- Like *Minority Report*, preventive detention punishes people for **what they might do**, not for **what they’ve**

done.

- Violates key principles of criminal justice:
  - **Presumption of innocence**
  - **Right to be heard (audi alteram partem)**
  - **Fair trial**
- The “**subjective satisfaction**” of the executive becomes the basis for detention — vulnerable to misuse, especially against **dissenters and political opponents**.

### Author’s Argument

- Preventive detention has become a “**police-constable constitution**” tool rather than a constitutional safeguard.
- Judicial warnings (like in Dhanya M.) are insufficient without **structural reform**.
- Such powers should be **limited to exceptional threats** — terrorism, transnational crime, or drug cartels — and **never used as a routine administrative measure**.

### Conclusion

Preventive detention represents a **constitutional anomaly** — a “**Devil’s Island**” separated from the ocean of rights.

Unless reined in through **judicial and legislative reform**, India risks institutionalising a “**pre-crime**” **framework** that erodes liberty — the very core of the Constitution’s promise

## India–U.K. Ties: New Defence and Economic Push

### Overview

During British Prime Minister **Keir Starmer’s visit to India**, both nations

signed multiple high-value agreements across **defence, clean energy, education, and investment**, signalling a renewed momentum in India–U.K. strategic and economic relations.

### Defence Cooperation: £350-Million Missile Deal

- **Agreement:** India has signed a **£350-million deal** with the U.K. to acquire **Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMMs)** for the Indian Army.
- **Manufacture:** The missiles will be **built in Belfast**, Northern Ireland, by **Thales Air Defence**.
- **Significance:**
  - Marks a “**complex weapons partnership**” under negotiation — likely to enhance co-development and co-manufacturing.
  - Strengthens India’s ‘**Make in India**’ & ‘**Atmanirbhar Bharat**’ goals through future joint ventures.
  - Deepens India’s access to **European defence technology** post-Brexit.

### Naval Collaboration: £250-Million Electric Engine Deal

- Both nations have agreed to **advance collaboration on electric-powered engines for naval ships**, worth **£250 million**.
- Implementing arrangement signed — part of the broader **India–U.K. Defence and Security Roadmap 2030**.
- Aligns with India’s push for **green defence and decarbonised naval operations**.

### Economic & Investment

Announcements

- **Indian Investments in the U.K.:**

- **64 Indian firms** have pledged **£1.3 billion** (~₹15,430 crore) in the U.K.
- Expected to **create nearly 7,000 new jobs** across sectors — from **engineering and technology** to **creative industries**.
- **Key examples:**
  - **TVS Motor:** £250 million to expand Norton Motorcycles and develop EVs.
  - **Cyient:** £100 million in innovation hubs (semiconductors, geospatial, clean energy).
  - **Muthoot Finance:** £100 million to expand financial operations across 20 U.K. branches.
  - **Hero Motors:** £100 million for e-mobility and aerospace ventures.
- **U.K. Investments in India:**
  - The Indian government has **not released equivalent data yet**, but U.K. interest is visible in **education, green tech, and manufacturing**.

### Education Diplomacy: U.K. Universities Enter India

- **University of Lancaster** and **University of Surrey** have received approval to open **campuses in India**.
- This follows UGC's 2023 guidelines allowing **foreign universities to operate independently in India**.
- Significance:
  - Boosts India's goal to become a **global education hub** under the **NEP 2020**.
  - Reduces "education outflow" by offering **U.K.-quality degrees domestically**.

### Broader Implications

- **Strategic Alignment:** Deepens the **Defence and Security Partnership** within the framework of the **India–U.K. 2030 Roadmap**.
- **Economic Ties:** Indian investment in the U.K. post-Brexit reflects **mutual dependence**, with India emerging as a **key investor** in U.K.'s high-tech and green sectors.
- **Soft Power Expansion:** Educational collaboration increases **people-to-people and knowledge connectivity**.
- **Global Significance:** Reinforces India's position as a **key partner in the Indo-Pacific** and an anchor for **Europe's engagement in Asia**.

### Challenges & Outlook

- The much-anticipated **India–U.K. Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** still remains **under negotiation**.
- Balancing **defence autonomy** with **foreign procurement** will be crucial for India.
- For the U.K., these deals are a **post-Brexit opportunity** to anchor trade in the Global South.

### India's Mental Health Crisis: The Silent Epidemic

Recent tragedies — like a couple in Shahjahanpur (UP) who ended their lives with their infant over debt, or multiple student suicides in Kota (Rajasthan) — highlight a **grim mental health crisis** spanning villages, cities, classrooms, and farms. These are not isolated events but part of a national problem.

#### The Data

- **Total suicides (2023):** 1,71,418, a slight rise from 2022.

- **High-risk states:** Andaman & Nicobar, Sikkim, Kerala; Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, MP, Karnataka, and West Bengal account for 40% of cases.
- **Gender:** 72.8% men.
- **Causes:** Family problems (31.9%), illness (19%), substance abuse (7%), relationship issues (~10%).
- **Farmers:** 10,786 suicides (6.3%), mostly Maharashtra & Karnataka; over 1 lakh farmers have died since 2014.
- **Hidden crisis:** Homemakers and caregivers, mostly women, face high rates of depression and abuse but remain underreported.

### Systemic Gaps

- Only **0.75 psychiatrists per 1,00,000 people** (WHO minimum: 1.7; ideal: 3).
- Counselling in schools and colleges is largely tokenistic.
- Mental Healthcare Act (2017) and National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2022) exist but have limited impact.
- The **₹270-crore mental health budget** is largely unspent.

### Technology as a Stopgap

Millions of Indians now turn to **AI platforms** for emotional support, not out of trust but loneliness. This reflects **institutional failure** rather than technological innovation. AI cannot replace trained human care without ethical safeguards.

#### Solutions Needed

1. **National emergency approach:** Cross-ministerial task force with independent funding.
2. **Expand professionals:** 3–5 mental health workers per 1,00,000 people via training, scholarships, and rural incentives.
3. **Institutionalise counselling:** Full-time

counsellors in schools, colleges, hospitals, and blocks.

4. **Target high-risk groups:** Farmers, students, homemakers, survivors of abuse, and caregivers.
5. **Regulate digital mental health:** Privacy disclosures, crisis redirection, and real-time access to licensed professionals.

#### Why It Matters

- Suicide is the leading cause of death among youth (15–29 years).
- Untreated mental illness could cost India over **\$1 trillion in GDP by 2030**.
- Each suicide is a silenced voice, a broken family, and a lost future.

“Every one of us has known the relief when someone or some system says: *You matter*. India must prove it values lives by acting decisively on mental health.”

**Open to Pak. talks, but have options: Muttaqi**

### Context:

Amid escalating border clashes between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Taliban’s acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said that while Kabul remains open to dialogue and diplomacy, it has “other means” if peaceful talks fail.

### Afghanistan–Pakistan Tensions

- Recent clashes: Pakistan conducted airstrikes in Kabul on Thursday, allegedly killing TTP leader Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud (a claim denied by the TTP).

In retaliation, Taliban forces struck across the Durand Line, reportedly killing 58

Pakistani soldiers. Border crossings have been temporarily closed after heavy fighting; Pakistan has captured 19 Afghan border posts.

- Muttaqi's remarks:
  - o Accused Pakistan of harbouring Islamic State (IS) fighters from West Asia.
  - o Claimed IS elements inside Pakistan were behind terror attacks in Russia and Iran.
  - o Asserted that Afghanistan has no terror groups within its borders.
  - o Criticised Pakistan's "internal failures" and inability to control law and order along the Durand Line.
  - o Said forced expulsion of Afghan refugees has worsened bilateral relations.

- Diplomatic note:

Saudi Arabia and Qatar reportedly intervened after hostilities began. Muttaqi stated Afghanistan's "doors are open for dialogue", but warned of "other means" if Pakistan doesn't respond positively.

### **Women and Media Controversy**

- Women journalists were excluded from a previous press briefing in New Delhi; Muttaqi attributed it to a "technical error".
- Defended Taliban policies, claiming Islam ensures rights for men and women.
- Said 2.8 million Afghan women and girls are enrolled in schools, though acknowledged "limitations in specific parts."
- Emphasised gradual reforms to prevent renewed conflict.

### **Symbolism and Tone**

- Muttaqi addressed the press with the Taliban's Islamic Emirate flag prominently displayed.
- Expressed regret for wartime deaths

and positioned the Taliban as a stabilising force after decades of conflict.

## **Broader Implications**

- The remarks underline deep mistrust between Kabul and Islamabad, reversing historical dynamics where Pakistan once backed the Taliban.
- Suggests Taliban's growing assertiveness in foreign policy, portraying Afghanistan as sovereign and independent of Pakistani influence.
- The human rights and women's rights situation remains contentious, with the Taliban offering only nominal assurances.

## **India sends Minister to Egypt for Gaza summit**

### **India's Representation**

- Minister of State for External Affairs Kirtivardhan Singh will represent India at the Sharm el-Sheikh Peace Summit on Gaza, co-hosted by Egypt and the United States on Monday.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was invited but declined due to short notice.
- The invitation was delivered by Egyptian Ambassador Kamel Galal.
- Mr. Modi had earlier met U.S. envoy Sergio Gor in Delhi, indicating continued diplomatic engagement.

### **About the Summit**

- To be co-chaired by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and U.S. President Donald Trump, the summit will discuss the Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal mediated by the U.S., Egypt, and Qatar.
- Over 20 world leaders are expected to attend, including those from France, Italy, Spain, the U.K., and Gulf states, alongside UN

## Secretary-General António Guterres.

- Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif will participate; Iran and Hamas declined invitations.
- Attendance of Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas remains uncertain.
- The event may witness the formal signing of the Gaza ceasefire agreement.

### Ceasefire Context

- The ceasefire aims to end the war in Gaza, facilitate the release of hostages, and ensure humanitarian access.
- As part of the truce, Israel will release about 2,000 Palestinian prisoners, while Hamas will return the bodies of Israeli hostages and release others alive.
- On the same day, President Trump will address the Israeli Knesset in Jerusalem.

### India–Egypt Diplomatic Context

- Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty will visit New Delhi later this week for the India–Egypt Strategic Dialogue, part of the Sisi–Modi Strategic Partnership (2023).
- Abdelatty is expected to discuss:
  - Reconstruction of Gaza,
  - Security cooperation, and
  - Possible alternative routes for the India–Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) through Sharm el Sheikh, given security issues at Israel's Haifa port.

### Short Note: What is the Gaza Summit?

The Gaza Peace Summit (2025, Sharm el-Sheikh) is a high-level international conference convened by Egypt and the United States to

finalise a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas after prolonged conflict in Gaza.

#### Its objectives include:

- Ending active hostilities and ensuring stability in Gaza,
- Releasing hostages and prisoners,
- Planning post-war reconstruction, and
- Restoring regional peace through diplomacy. The summit gathers key global and regional stakeholders — from the UN, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia — to build consensus for a sustainable peace framework and humanitarian recovery for the Palestinian people.

## “Indicators of Israel's Unsustainable Hegemony”

### Background: The Illusion of Invincibility

Israel's recent military successes —

- the destruction of Hezbollah's forces in Lebanon,
- the fall of the Assad regime and extended control over Syrian territory,
- the devastation of Gaza and weakening of Hamas, and
- the crippling of Iran's nuclear capability (with U.S. help) — have created the impression that Israel is the unchallenged hegemon in the Middle East.

However, Ayooob argues that this dominance masks deep structural fragilities.

### The Trump-Imposed Ceasefire

- The U.S.-brokered ceasefire in Gaza (announced by President Donald Trump) appears pro-Israel but, in reality, forced Israel to halt operations and withdraw partially.
- Netanyahu's goal of eliminating Hamas

and fully controlling Gaza failed.

- Hamas, though weakened, still exists and retains bargaining power by exchanging hostages for prisoners.
- The ceasefire exposed the limits of Israeli military power and its dependence on Washington's directives.

### **Demographic Dilemma: A Binational Reality**

- Within Israel's 1967 borders: ~9 million people, 20% Palestinians.
- In West Bank + Gaza: ~6 million Palestinians.
- A "Greater Israel" (as envisioned by right-wing Zionists) would thus be half-Jewish, half-Palestinian — a binational state.

**This poses two unsolvable choices:**

1. Grant equal rights to Palestinians, ending the Zionist vision of a Jewish state; or
  2. Continue apartheid-style rule, inviting global condemnation and isolation (akin to pre-1994 South Africa). Either path leads to internal division or international ostracism, making long-term hegemony untenable.
3. Regional Alienation
- Israel's brutal actions in Gaza (67,000 Palestinians killed) have alienated even Arab states that once saw Israel as a partner against Iran — notably the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia (signatories or prospective members of the Abraham Accords).
  - The attempted bombing of Hamas negotiators in Doha (Sept. 2025) shattered trust in Tel Aviv's assurances.
  - As a result, normalisation with Saudi Arabia — once a U.S. Israeli goal — has been set back by years.
  - Israel is now seen as a reckless, untrustworthy actor by both Arab

governments and their populations.

#### 4. Waning U.S. Public Support

- American public opinion — Israel's traditional safety net — has shifted dramatically:
  - o 60% of Americans now hold negative views of the Israeli government (Pew).
  - o 61% of American Jews believe Israel committed war crimes; 40% say it committed genocide (Washington Post).
  - o Human rights groups and genocide scholars echo this assessment. Even parts of the MAGA Republican base have turned critical, marking a historic erosion of bipartisan support.

#### 5. Strategic Recalibration in Washington

- The U.S. no longer needs Israel as much strategically: Iran's military and nuclear capacity has been degraded; the "Axis of Resistance" weakened.
- Israel, once seen as a U.S. asset, may now be viewed as an obstacle to America's broader strategic and economic goals in West Asia.
- President Trump's transactional diplomacy could lead to a policy shift where U.S. interests take precedence over unconditional Israeli support.
- Without this backing, Israel's hegemonic ambitions would collapse.

### **Conclusion**

Ayoob concludes that Israel's current dominance is built on unstable foundations:

- A demographically divided society,
- Eroding regional legitimacy, and
- Declining American backing. He predicts that Israel's hegemony will unravel sooner rather than later, leaving it weakened, isolated, and dependent — a "colossus with feet of clay."

## India–Canada Relations Back on Track: Key Developments

### Context

After a year of strained ties over Canada's 2023 allegations involving a Khalistani activist's killing, India and Canada are moving to restore normal relations. The meeting between S. Jaishankar and Anita Anand marks a diplomatic reset.

### Key Developments

#### 1. High-Level Engagements

- o India invited Canadian PM Mark Carney to the AI Summit (Feb 2026).
- o A senior Canadian PMO official's presence indicated the visit is under serious consideration.

#### 2. Rebuilding Economic and Energy Cooperation

- o Agreement to restart trade and investment talks.
- o Re-establish Energy Dialogue on renewables and critical minerals.
- o Relaunch Science & Technology Committee.
- o Begin talks on SMR (Small Modular Reactor) nuclear technology.

#### 3. AI and Technology

- o Canada encouraged to send AI firms and researchers to India's AI Impact Summit 2026, showing interest in tech collaboration.

#### 4. Trade Talks

- o Both sides may start afresh on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), instead of reviving the old draft.

#### 5. Security and Trust Building

- o Aim to separate security disputes

from cooperation areas.

- o Recent meeting between Canadian NSA Catherine Drouin and India's NSA Ajit Doval kept dialogue open.

### Analysis

#### 1. Diplomatic Significance

- o Indicates a reset in ties post-2023.
- o Focus on pragmatic cooperation over political friction.

#### 2. Economic Implications

- Trade and energy revival benefits both sides:
- India gains access to critical minerals.
  - Canada gets a growing market for its resources and tech.

#### 3. Strategic Implications

- SMR cooperation supports India's clean energy goals.
- Collaboration also balances China's tech and mineral influence.

#### 4. Challenges

- Trust deficit over Khalistan issue remains.
  - Domestic politics in Canada could affect progress.

### Conclusion

India–Canada ties are in repair mode. Renewed cooperation in AI, energy, and trade signals a strategic recalibration aimed at mutual growth while cautiously managing political sensitivities

**Vital Statistics of India (CRS)**

## Report 2023

### Context

The Registrar-General of India (RGI) released the Civil Registration System (CRS) Report 2023, highlighting trends in births, deaths, and sex ratio at birth across India.

### Key Data Highlights

#### 1. Births

- 2.52 crore births registered in 2023.
- Decline of 2.32 lakh from 2022.
- Birth registration completeness: 98.4%.
- Institutional births: 74.7%.
- Sikkim data not included.

#### 2. Deaths

- 86.6 lakh deaths registered in 2023 (slight rise from 86.5 lakh in 2022).
- No major spike in deaths post-COVID; pandemic deaths reported at 5.33 lakh (as of May 2023).
- 2021 saw a sharp increase — 102.2 lakh deaths compared to 81.2 lakh in 2020 (due to COVID impact).

#### Sex Ratio at Birth (Females per 1,000 Males)

- Lowest: Jharkhand (899), Bihar (900), Telangana (906), Maharashtra (909), Gujarat (910), Haryana (911), Mizoram (911).
- Highest: Arunachal Pradesh (1,085), Nagaland (1,007), Goa (973), Ladakh & Tripura (972), Kerala (967).
- Bihar has consistently reported the lowest ratio since 2020.

#### Statewise Birth Registration Performance

- Above 90% (within 21 days): Gujarat, Puducherry, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, Andaman &

Nicobar Islands, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Punjab.

- 80–90%: Odisha, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh.
- 50–80%: Assam, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, Rajasthan, J&K, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh.

### SC Questions ED's Role in Tamil Nadu Liquor Scam Probe

#### Background

The **Supreme Court** extended the **stay** on the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** probe into alleged **money laundering** involving **TASMAC**, Tamil Nadu's State liquor retailer.

The case concerns **irregularities (2014–2021)** and alleged **kickbacks** in procurement and retail operations.

#### Federalism Concern

A Bench led by **CJI B.R. Gavai** questioned whether ED's actions **encroach upon the State's authority** to investigate.

"Would this not amount to encroachment on the State's right to investigate?"

The Court emphasized the need to preserve **India's federal structure**.

#### Tamil Nadu's Argument (Kapil Sibal)

- **47 FIRs** already filed by **State Vigilance Department**.
- **ED raids** on government offices questioned as violating **State autonomy**.
- **Section 66(2) of PMLA**: ED must **share information** with State agencies — allegedly not followed.
- Accused ED of **overstepping** into

**corruption**, a State subject.

### ED's Defence (ASG S.V. Raju)

- Claimed **large-scale corruption**; ED probing only the **money-laundering** aspect.
- **Predicate offences** (basis for ED action) were from **State FIRs**.
- Alleged Tamil Nadu was **closing FIRs to undermine ED's case**.

### Court's Observation

The CJI reiterated that **law and order must operate within its domain**, warning against **institutional overreach**.

He avoided direct criticism of ED but hinted at **growing concern** over its powers and perception.

### Political Context

The **DMK-led Tamil Nadu government** accuses the **BJP-led Centre** of **misusing Central agencies** to target opposition-ruled States — raising a broader debate on **Centre-State relations** and **political neutrality** of investigative bodies.

### Legal & Constitutional Angle

- **Article 246, Seventh Schedule** → division of powers between Union and States.
- **PMLA, 2002** → empowers ED to probe money-laundering.
- **Vijay Madanlal Choudhary case (2022)** → upheld ED's powers but drew flak for curbing transparency (no ECIR copy to accused).

### Enforcement Directorate (ED)

- **Established:** 1956 under the **Department of Revenue**, Ministry of Finance.
- **Laws Enforced:**
  1. **PMLA, 2002** – money laundering cases.
  2. **FEMA, 1999** – foreign exchange

violations.

- **Powers:** Attach property, conduct raids, arrest under PMLA.
- **Criticism:** Political bias, **low conviction rate (≈1%)**, **federal overreach**, **lack of transparency**.

### India to Train Border Security Force of Mongolia

#### Key Announcement

During Mongolian President **Khurelsukh Ukhnaa's** visit to **New Delhi**, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** announced a new **capacity-building programme** to train **Mongolia's border security forces**. This marks a significant step in strengthening **India–Mongolia defence cooperation**.

#### Defence and Security Cooperation

- India will **appoint a Defence Attaché** at its **Embassy in Ulaanbaatar**.
- The two countries already conduct **joint military exercises**.
- The new initiative expands **training, capacity building, and strategic coordination**.
- Officials stated that Mongolia sees **“significant benefits** in training with India.”

**Key Focus:** Enhancing **border management skills** and **institutional cooperation** in defence.

#### Cultural and People-to-People Ties

- Mr. Modi emphasized the **shared Buddhist heritage** between the two nations.
- He announced that the **holy relics of Lord Buddha's disciples — Sariputra and Maudgalyayana — will be sent to Mongolia** next year.
- India will begin **issuing free e-visas** for Mongolian citizens to promote

tourism and cultural exchange.

**Symbolism:** Buddhism acts as a **spiritual and cultural bridge** in India–Mongolia relations.

### Economic and Development Cooperation

- The two sides signed **10 MoUs** covering:
  - ◆ Immigration
  - ◆ Humanitarian aid
  - ◆ Geology & mineral resources
  - ◆ Yoga promotion
  - ◆ Cultural cooperation
- India continues to support Mongolia in **infrastructure, energy, and capacity building** projects.

### India–Mongolia Relations

#### Historical and Cultural Ties

- Relations date back to **ancient Buddhist connections** (since the 1st millennium CE).
- Mongolia regards India as a **“spiritual neighbour.”**
- India gifted a **Buddha statue and temple complex** in Ulaanbaatar (2015).

#### Strategic and Defence Cooperation

- India was the **first country outside the Soviet bloc** to establish diplomatic ties with Mongolia in **1955**.
- Mongolia participates in India’s **Khaan Quest** and **Nomadic Elephant** joint military exercises.
- India assists Mongolia in **border force training, defence education, and cybersecurity capacity**.
- A **Line of Credit of \$1.2 billion** was extended by India for a **oil refinery project** in Mongolia — a key energy security initiative.

### Geopolitical Significance

- Mongolia is a **landlocked democracy** between **Russia and China**.
- India–Mongolia partnership provides **strategic depth** to India’s **“Act East”** and **“Connect Central Asia”** policies.
- Strengthening ties counters **China’s regional influence** and reinforces **multi-alignment in Asia**.

### WHO Issues Alert on Contaminated Oral Liquid Medicines in India

#### Context

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has issued a **Medical Product Alert** for **three contaminated oral liquid medicines** identified in India on **October 8, 2025**.

The products failed to meet **quality standards** and were deemed **substandard** due to the presence of **diethylene glycol (DEG)** — a **toxic compound** that can cause **kidney failure, neurological damage, or death** if consumed.

#### Affected Medicines & Manufacturers

The contaminated medicines belong to specific batches of:

- **Coldrif** – by *Sresan Pharmaceutical*
- **Respifresh TR** – by *Rednex Pharmaceuticals*
- **ReLife** – by *Shape Pharma*

All are **oral liquid formulations** used for **cough, cold, and flu relief**.

#### WHO’s Advisory

- WHO urged Indian regulators to conduct **targeted market surveillance**, especially in **informal and unregulated supply chains** where such products might circulate unnoticed.

- It recommended evaluating **other medicines** from the **same manufacturing sites**, particularly those produced **since December 2024**.
- The agency is working **closely with Indian health authorities** to identify the **source of contamination** and mitigate public health risks.

### CDSCO's Response

- The **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)** confirmed **DEG contamination** in three products.
- It stated that **none of the contaminated batches were exported** and there was **no evidence of illegal export**.
- Immediate **recall and suspension** of production have been undertaken at the concerned facilities.

### Health Risks

- **Diethylene glycol (DEG)** is **highly toxic** and has been historically linked to **mass poisoning incidents** (e.g., Gambia, Uzbekistan, and India).
- Consumption can lead to **acute kidney injury, liver failure, and death**, especially among **children**.

## Execution of Nimisha Priya in Yemen Stalled: Centre Informs Supreme Court

### Context

- The **Supreme Court of India** was informed that the execution of **Nimisha Priya**, an Indian nurse sentenced to death in Yemen, has been **stalled** due to ongoing diplomatic and mediation efforts.
- **Nimisha Priya**, a nurse from **Palakkad, Kerala**, was convicted in **2020** for the

**murder of a Yemeni national**, her business partner.

### Current Legal Status

- The **Attorney-General R. Venkataramani**, representing the Centre, stated before a Bench of **Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta** that *"nothing adverse is happening"* in the case.
- A **new mediator** has stepped in to continue negotiations with the victim's family.
- The **Supreme Court** agreed to keep the matter pending and listed it for **January 2026**, allowing urgent hearings if new developments arise.

### Diplomatic & Mediation Efforts

- Execution, initially scheduled for **July 16, 2025**, was **postponed** following:
  - **Diplomatic intervention** by the Indian government.
  - Mediation efforts by **Kanthapuram A.P. Aboobacker Musliyar**, a respected Islamic scholar from Kerala.
- The **International Action Council (IAC)** has been providing legal and humanitarian assistance to Ms. Priya.

### Blood Money Option (Diyya)

- Under **Sharia law**, the victim's family may pardon the accused in return for **"blood money" (Diyya)**.
- The petitioner's counsel suggested this as a possible route to secure Ms. Priya's release, if the victim's family agrees.

### Humanitarian Dimension

- Ms. Priya's **12-year-old daughter** lives in a convent in India.
- Her **mother** works as a domestic helper and her **husband** is an autorickshaw driver — highlighting

the family's financial and emotional hardship.

### Legal & Diplomatic Implications

- Reflects the **complexity of consular protection and human rights diplomacy** in death penalty cases involving Indians abroad.
- Balances **India's diplomatic limitations** (as Yemen is in a conflict zone) with humanitarian and legal efforts to save a citizen.
- Highlights the **role of civil society and religious diplomacy** in conflict resolution

## A Reading of Revisionism in Constitutional History

### Context

- A **revisionist narrative** has emerged, claiming that **Sir Benegal Narsing Rau**, the Constitutional Adviser, was the *real architect* of the Indian Constitution — while **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, merely “polished” Rau’s draft.
- The author argues that this reinterpretation is **not mere academic debate**, but an **attempt to erase Dalit agency** and diminish Ambedkar’s moral centrality in India’s founding.

### Complementary, Not Competing Roles

Sir B.N. Rau	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
Constitutional Adviser (July 1946)	Chairman, Drafting Committee

Sir B.N. Rau	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
Drafted a <b>technical “rough draft”</b> of 243 Articles and 13 Schedules	Transformed it into a <b>political covenant</b> through debate and consensus
Worked outside the Assembly; had <b>no representative mandate</b>	Defended every clause <b>within the Assembly</b> , during Partition and Gandhi’s assassination
Laid the structural groundwork	Infused the Constitution with <b>justice, equality, and moral vision</b>

**Ambedkar’s acknowledgment:** He credited Rau for the *rough draft*, and S.N. Mukherjee for legal drafting — proving he never denied their roles, but **led the moral and political transformation** of the text.

### The Political Motive Behind Revisionism

- The new narrative reflects a **discomfort with Ambedkar’s Dalit identity** and his radical challenge to caste privilege.
- By elevating Rau and sidelining Ambedkar, revisionists **sanitize** the Constitution — turning a **social revolution** into a **bureaucratic exercise**.
- This revisionism aims to **strip the Constitution of its moral and egalitarian essence**.

### Ambedkar’s Inclusion and Gandhi’s

## Role

- After Partition, Ambedkar lost his Bengal seat. Despite past clashes, **Mahatma Gandhi insisted** that Ambedkar must be in the Constituent Assembly.
- Gandhi's foresight prevented the alienation of Dalits during a fragile nation-building phase.
- Ambedkar's eventual leadership **transformed the drafting process into a moral project of inclusion.**

## Ambedkar's Enduring Legacy

- He infused **Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, and affirmative action** with deep ethical meaning.
- His warning endures as the Republic's moral compass:  
"Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy."
- Ambedkar linked **justice, equality, and fraternity** as inseparable values — a framework still relevant to India's democratic challenges.

## Guarding the Republic's Memory

- Recasting Rau as the Constitution's "Father" is part of a **larger ideological project** to erase the Constitution's **radical social roots.**
- The Constitution was born **not in bureaucratic calm but amid Partition, assassination, and oppression.**
- **Rau** was the constitutional **engineer**, but **Ambedkar** remains its **architect and moral founder**

**U.S. trade body moves court over Trump's H-1B fee hike**

## Context

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has filed a lawsuit against the Donald Trump administration's decision to impose a \$100,000 fee on new H-1B visa applications.

## Key Details

### Who filed the case?

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a leading business advocacy group representing American companies.

### Where was the case filed?

In the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

### Main argument:

The Chamber contends that the fee hike violates existing laws, specifically the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), which mandates that visa fees must be based on administrative processing costs, not as a punitive or protectionist measure.

### Purpose of the H-1B programme:

Created by Congress to allow U.S. companies to hire high-skilled foreign workers (especially in STEM fields) when local talent is unavailable.

### Impact of the new fee:

- The \$100,000 per application fee could make participation financially unviable for start-ups, small, and medium businesses.
- Large tech companies may manage the cost, but smaller firms may withdraw from using the H-1B route altogether.
- Could reduce access to global skilled talent, hurting innovation and competitiveness.

### Government rationale:

The Trump administration argues the fee helps protect American jobs by discouraging companies from hiring cheaper foreign workers.

### Duration of the fee:

The hike is temporary (one year) but can be extended by the government.

### Data and Context

- As of January 2025, there were 7.3 lakh (730,000) H-1B visa holders in the U.S.
- ~70% of them were Indian nationals, highlighting India's major stake in the issue.
- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) had 5,505 H-1B visas approved in 2025 (as of June) — the second-highest globally.

### Implications

- **Legal:** May set a precedent on executive overreach — whether the administration can impose such large fees without congressional approval.
- **Economic:** Could impact the tech sector and India–U.S. economic ties, as Indian IT firms are among the largest H-1B users.
- **Political:** Reflects the continuing protectionist stance of Trump-era immigration policy.

## Venezuela mobilises troops amid U.S. build-up and strikes in Caribbean

### Key Developments

#### Venezuela's troop mobilisation:

In response to escalating U.S. military activity in the Caribbean, Venezuela has deployed 17,000 troops in Táchira State (bordering Colombia) and reinforced positions in Amazonas (near Colombia and Brazil) and coastal areas.

The mobilisation follows a series of U.S. naval strikes on alleged drug-smuggling

boats, which have killed at least 27 people in recent weeks.

#### Trigger for escalation:

The U.S. military build-up — with several warships stationed in the Caribbean — is part of a purported anti-narcotics campaign.

However, analysts and regional leaders view it as an illegal and politically motivated operation aimed at destabilising the Venezuelan government.

#### Washington's stance:

U.S. President Donald Trump has confirmed authorising covert CIA operations in Venezuela and hinted at possibly expanding military action from sea to land, claiming the U.S. now “has the sea under control.”

#### Leadership shake-up:

Admiral Alvin Holsey, head of the U.S. Southern Command overseeing operations in Latin America, announced his resignation just a year into his tenure — adding to recent instability among top U.S. military leadership.

### Venezuelan Reaction

#### President Nicolás Maduro:

Condemned U.S. actions as a “regime change attempt” and accused Washington of “CIA-orchestrated coups.” Ordered military exercises in urban and border regions to prepare for possible incursions.

#### Vice-President Delcy Rodríguez:

Denied reports that she had secretly negotiated with U.S. officials about Mr. Maduro's removal.

#### Regional impact:

- Colombia's President Gustavo Petro has urged the UN to initiate a criminal process against Mr. Trump for what he described as illegal extrajudicial killings of Colombian nationals.

- Trinidad and Tobago is investigating whether two citizens were among those killed in recent U.S. strikes.

## International Legal Concerns

### Legality of U.S. strikes:

Experts argue the U.S. naval attacks violate international law, as summary executions at sea are illegal—even if the targets are proven narcotics traffickers.

The U.S. has not released evidence proving that the vessels targeted were engaged in drug smuggling.

### UN Charter implications:

The strikes and covert operations, if not authorised by the UN Security Council or justified by self-defence, could amount to a breach of sovereignty and acts of aggression under international law.

### Geopolitical Implications

Dimension Impact Security Raises fears of a direct U.S.–Venezuela confrontation and destabilisation of the Caribbean and Latin American region.

Regional Politics May polarise Latin American countries between U.S.-aligned governments and leftist regimes sympathetic to Venezuela.

2025's 4.3% rise.

## Key Reasons

- Late implementation of GST rate cuts affected sales of consumer non-durable goods.
- Dealers faced pricing and stock adjustment issues, delaying the benefit of tax cuts.
- Expected recovery in Oct–Nov 2025, as per Madan Sabnavis (Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda).

## Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

- What: A monthly indicator that measures industrial output growth in India.
- Released by: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- Base Year: 2011–12.
- Major Sectors:
  - Manufacturing – 77.6%
  - Mining – 14.4%
  - Electricity – 8%
- Purpose: Shows how India's factories, mines, and power plants are performing; used by RBI and government to track industrial health.
- If IIP = 4%, industrial output grew 4% compared to the same month last year

### About Eight Core Sectors:

- These comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- The eight core sector industries in decreasing order of their weightage: Refinery Products> Electricity> Steel> Coal> Crude Oil> Natural Gas> Cement> Fertilizers.

## IIP Growth Dips to Three-Month Low of 4%

### Overview

- Industrial activity slowed to a three-month low of 4% in September 2025, according to data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- Despite being higher than 3.2% in September 2024, the growth momentum weakened after July

## China–ASEAN Upgrade Free Trade Agreement (FTA 3.0)

### Context

- China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed the upgraded FTA (3.0 version) on October 29, 2025, in Kuala Lumpur.
- The move comes amid U.S. tariff pressures and rising global trade tensions.

### Key Highlights

- **Scope Expanded:** Includes new areas like digital economy, green economy, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals.
- **Aim:** To reduce trade barriers, improve supply chain connectivity, and boost industrial integration.
- **Negotiations:** Began in Nov 2022, concluded in May 2025.
- **Replaces:** The earlier FTA (effective since 2010).

### Trade Significance

- ASEAN is China's largest trading partner — bilateral trade stood at \$771 billion (2024).
- ASEAN's combined GDP: \$3.8 trillion.
- The agreement reinforces their role in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which covers 30% of global GDP.

### Geopolitical Context

- Comes as China seeks to counter U.S. tariffs under the Trump administration.
- Beijing aims to project itself as a champion of open trade, despite criticism over its export restrictions on rare earths.
- Analysts view RCEP and ASEAN–China FTA 3.0 as a strategic buffer against Western trade barriers.

### Significance

- Strengthens China–ASEAN economic interdependence.
- Could diversify regional trade networks and reduce reliance on the U.S. market.
- Symbolises Asia's push toward regional integration and resilience in the face of protectionism

## The vision of Model Youth Gram Sabhas

### Overview

The article highlights the **importance of Gram Sabhas** as the foundation of India's grassroots democracy and introduces the **Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS)** initiative launched in 2025 to make civic participation aspirational among the youth. The author argues that **real democracy begins at the village level**, and India's future depends on citizens who view governance as a shared civic duty, not merely the government's task.

### Gram Sabha: The Forgotten Cornerstone

- **Article 243A** of the Constitution empowers the Gram Sabha to deliberate on budgets, development, and governance priorities.
- Despite being the **bedrock of participatory democracy**, it remains neglected in public discourse and education.
- Civic education emphasizes Parliament and the UN, leaving **Panchayati Raj institutions invisible** to students and youth aspirations.

### Why the Model Youth Gram Sabha?

- To bridge the gap between **classroom**

civics and lived democracy, the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** launched the **Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS)** in 2025, in collaboration with the **Ministries of Education and Tribal Welfare**.

- The initiative **simulates real Gram Sabha sessions** where students act as Sarpanch, ward members, and officials to debate budgets and plans.
- It converts **abstract civics into practical experience**, fostering awareness, leadership, and participatory values among young citizens.

### Implementation and Reach

- **Phase 1:** Over **1,000 schools** across 28 States and 8 UTs, including **Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, Eklavya Model Residential Schools, and Zilla Parishad schools**.
- **Training Network:** 126 master trainers and over **1,200 trained teachers** so far.
- **Successful pilots** held in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan demonstrated strong student engagement.
- **Phase 2** aims to expand to **all State-run schools** nationwide.

### From Simulation to Transformation

- The MYGS encourages **active citizenship**, akin to how the **Model United Nations fosters global awareness**.
- It helps youth understand **rights, duties, and consensus-building**, nurturing future local and national leaders.
- The model has the potential to **transform civic education** by making governance relatable and aspirational.

### Towards a “Viksit Bharat”

- True development requires **citizens**

**who participate, not just policies that govern.**

- The MYGS is a **seedbed for democratic renewal**, making participation a culture rather than a duty.
- When every child learns that **their village meeting is as vital as Parliament**, democracy becomes a lived reality.

**₹3,000 crore lost to digital arrest scams: Supreme Court**

### Context

The Supreme Court has taken **suo motu cognisance** of a rising menace known as “**digital arrests**”, where cybercriminals impersonate law enforcement or judicial officials to extort money from victims.

### Key Highlights

- **Extent of the Scam:** According to a **confidential report** submitted by the Union Government, over **₹3,000 crore** has been siphoned off from victims in India — largely **elderly citizens** — through digital arrest scams.
- **Judicial Concern:** A Bench led by **Justice Surya Kant (CJI-designate)** described the situation as a “**very big challenge**”, stating that the fraud was **much larger than anticipated**.
- **Government’s Stand:** **Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta** admitted the issue was **worse than expected**, with organised cybercriminal networks operating across borders from “**scam compounds**”.
- **Attorney-General R. Venkataramani** noted that many such crimes are run

by international money-laundering syndicates.

in tech-related law enforcement oversight.

### Supreme Court's Observations

- The judiciary will issue strict orders to empower agencies like the **CBI** to tackle these scams effectively.
- Earlier, the Court had suggested **entrusting the CBI** to investigate digital arrests and their cross-border links.
- Justice Kant emphasised that this was not just a **financial issue** but also a **human rights concern**, as victims face humiliation, fear, and coercion.

### Nature of Digital Arrest Scams

- Fraudsters **pose as police officers or judges**, using **forged documents** and **AI-generated videos** of fake courtrooms.
- Victims are **threatened with arrest** unless they pay money.
- Technology such as **AI morphing, deepfakes, and virtual backgrounds** is used to lend authenticity.
- Some scams also involve **false promises of foreign jobs**, trapping people into **digital enslavement**.

### Case Trigger

- The court acted after a **senior citizen couple in Ambala, Haryana**, was digitally “arrested” by scammers who extorted **₹1.05 crore** using **forged court orders**.

### Significance

- Highlights the **growing misuse of AI and deepfake technology** in cybercrime.
- Raises the need for **international cooperation**, stronger **digital literacy**, and **legal frameworks** against **cross-border cyber fraud**.
- Reflects the judiciary's increasing role

## Great Nicobar Project: Map Ready for Denotification of Tribal Reserve

### Context

The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands Administration** has prepared a **Geographic Information System (GIS) map** for **denotification and renotification of tribal reserve land** on **Great Nicobar Island (GNI)** — a step towards implementing the **₹92,000-crore mega-infrastructure project** that is currently under legal and environmental scrutiny.

### Key Developments

- **GIS Mapping:**
  - The administration has **completed GIS mapping** to identify areas proposed for **denotification** (removal from tribal reserve status) and **renotification** (reassigning other areas as reserves).
  - Mapping done in coordination with the **Forest Department**.
- **Next Steps:**
  - **Sites for communication towers** within these lands will soon be finalised after consultations with:
    - The **Assistant Commissioner of Campbell Bay**, and
    - The **Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS)** — the body representing the **Shompen tribe**.
- **Tribal Welfare:**
  - A **“Comprehensive Tribal Welfare Plan”** for the Shompen and Nicobarese tribes is expected to

be finalised **by next month**.

- **Transit accommodation** for project staff has already been built.
- **Oversight:**
  - Updates were presented to the **ANIIDCO Monitoring Committee** on tribal matters.
  - The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO)** is the nodal agency for implementing the project.

### About the Great Nicobar Project

- **Estimated Cost:** ₹92,000 crore.
- **Major Components:**
  1. **International transshipment port** at Galathea Bay.
  2. **Greenfield international airport.**
  3. **Power plant.**
  4. **Township** for approximately 3 lakh people (projected).
- **Objective:** To position Great Nicobar as a **strategic and commercial hub** near the **Malacca Strait** — one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

### Legal and Environmental Concerns

- **Forest & Environmental Clearances:**
  - Both are **under challenge** before the **Calcutta High Court** and **tribunals**.
- **Tribal and Ecological Concerns:**
  - The island is home to the **Shompen**, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).
  - Denotification of tribal reserves can proceed **only after** settlement of **forest rights** under the **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006**.
  - The **legality of forest rights settlement** claimed by the

administration is being **contested in court**.

### Significance

- Marks an **administrative push** to expedite the project amid judicial scrutiny.
- Raises debate on the **balance between strategic infrastructure and tribal–ecological protection**.
- Tests the **implementation of the FRA, 2006**, in **Union Territories**, where tribal land rights are often under-defined.

**Supreme Court urges proactive measures to curb Delhi pollution**

### Context

The **Supreme Court of India** has directed authorities in **Delhi–NCR** to take **proactive and preventive steps** to control air pollution levels and prevent the situation from deteriorating to the **'severe' category**.

### Key Developments

- **Bench Composition:**  
Led by **Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai**.
- **Direction to Agencies:**  
The Court directed the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** in the **National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas** to:
  - File a **detailed affidavit** with **clear data** on air quality and control measures.
  - Present a **comprehensive action plan** for the upcoming weeks.
- **Monitoring Gaps Identified:**
  - **Amicus Curiae Aparajita Singh**

informed the court that many **air quality monitoring stations were non-functional** during Deepavali.

- Out of **37 monitoring stations**, only **9 were operational**, making it difficult to implement the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** effectively.
- **Government's Response:**
  - **Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati** assured the Court that agencies would file the required affidavit soon.

### Background

- On **October 15**, the Supreme Court had allowed the **sale and bursting of "green firecrackers"** during Deepavali, with safeguards to **balance traditional practices with public health and environmental concerns**.

### Issues Highlighted

- **Poor implementation of GRAP** due to data unavailability.
- **Technical inefficiency** in air quality monitoring infrastructure.
- Need for **real-time coordination** between **pollution control boards, CAQM**, and **local authorities**.

### Significance

- Reinforces the judiciary's role in ensuring **accountability in environmental governance**.
- Underscores the need for **data-driven pollution management**.
- Calls attention to **institutional gaps** in Delhi's air quality monitoring system.

## Clean up the Voter List Urgently, but not the Bihar Way

### The Core Issue: Faulty Voter Database

- India's **voter list** violates basic data principles — voter ID numbers are **not unique** across States.
- Example: Voters in Bengal and Uttar Pradesh can share the **same ID number**, showing **technical incompetence**.
- This duplication threatens **electoral accuracy and credibility**.

### Serious Security Loopholes

- Anyone can change a voter's **registered mobile number** via *Form-8*, without the voter's knowledge.
- Using the new number, one can even **delete a voter's name** from the rolls.
- **6,000 genuine voters** were targeted in Karnataka's Aland constituency — exposed by **Rahul Gandhi (2025)**.
- ECI later quietly shifted to **Aadhaar-linked mobile verification**, indirectly admitting system flaws.

### Need for a Clean-up, But Not Bihar's Way

- A **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** to clean voter lists is necessary but must not follow **Bihar's flawed model**.
- The Bihar SIR was **hurried and politically motivated**, leading to **deletion of genuine voters**.
- Such rushed exercises **damage trust** and **weaken democracy**.

### Aadhaar: Key to De-duplication

- **Aadhaar linkage** ensures every voter has a **unique, non-transferable ID**.

- ECI's argument that Aadhaar isn't proof of citizenship misses the point
  - Not every Aadhaar holder is a voter,
  - But every voter **should have Aadhaar** for clean rolls.
- Rejecting Aadhaar reflects **technical ignorance or deliberate evasion**.

### Door-to-Door Verification Essential

- Genuine clean-up needs **household-level verification**, not online self-enrolment.
- Example: **Telangana** completed door-to-door enumeration of 3.5 crore people in two months.
- ECI should adopt this model instead of **rushed, one-month revisions**.

### Include Political Parties in the Process

- The ECI must work **jointly with all political parties**.
- In **Maharashtra (2024)**, Opposition evidence of fake voters was ignored, leading to alleged manipulation.
- The SIR process should:
  - Include **multi-party consultation** at all levels.
  - Be **video recorded** and **transparent**.
  - End with **publication of digital, machine-readable voter rolls**.

### The Way Forward

- Cleaning voter lists is crucial, but **trust, time, and technology** must guide it.
- A credible process should involve:
  - **Aadhaar-linked verification**,
  - **Door-to-door checks**, and
  - **Opposition participation** for accountability.

- A **Bihar-style, hurried purge** must be strictly avoided.

### Key Message

India needs clean voter lists built through **competence, inclusivity, and transparency — not haste, bias, or secrecy**

## Contempt of Court in India

### Context and Recent Controversy

- Recent alleged **derogatory remarks** against the **Chief Justice of India and the Supreme Court** have raised concerns.
- Such comments, especially spread via media/social media, may **erode public trust** and **obstruct justice**, forming grounds for contempt proceedings.
- The issue highlights the **balance between free speech and respect for judicial authority**.

### Constitutional Basis

- **Article 19(2)**: Allows reasonable restrictions on free speech for "contempt of court."
- **Articles 129 and 215**:
  - Declare the **Supreme Court and High Courts as "courts of record."**
  - A **court of record** means its judgments are preserved as evidence and **it has inherent power to punish for contempt**.
- This constitutional power is **elaborated by the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971**.

### Types of Contempt

#### (a) Civil Contempt – Section 2(b):

- *Wilful disobedience* of a judgment,

decree, order, writ, or **breach of an undertaking** given to a court.

### (b) Criminal Contempt – Section 2(c):

- Publication or act that:
  1. **Scandalises or lowers** the authority of any court,
  2. **Prejudices or interferes** with judicial proceedings, or
  3. **Interferes** with the **administration of justice**.

Hence, contempt is **more than mere disrespect** — it covers acts **threatening judicial independence or justice delivery**.

### Procedure for Initiation

- Proceedings may be:
  - **Suo motu** by the **Supreme Court or High Court**, or
  - By a **third party** with consent of the **Attorney General (for SC)** or **Advocate General (for HC)**.

### Judicial Interpretation and Key Cases

- **Ashwini Kumar Ghosh v. Arabinda Bose (1952):**
  - *Fair criticism* of judgments ≠ contempt.
  - Only **unfair, malicious, or scandalous attacks** qualify.
- **Anil Ratan Sarkar v. Hirak Ghosh (2002):**
  - Power to punish for contempt must be used **cautiously and sparingly**.
- **M.V. Jayarajan v. High Court of Kerala (2015):**
  - Abusive public speech against a High Court order = **criminal contempt**.
- **Shanmugam @ Lakshminarayanan v. High Court of Madras (2025):**

- Purpose of contempt power is to **uphold the administration of justice**, not protect individual judges.

### Limits of Criticism

- **Constructive criticism** of court actions is **permissible in democracy**.
- However, **misrepresentation, falsehoods, or personal attacks** can:
  - Damage **public confidence**,
  - Violate **constitutional morality**, and
  - Undermine **judicial independence**.

### Broader Democratic Implications

- Judiciary's credibility ensures **rule of law and substantive justice**.
- Misuse of speech that **diminishes judicial authority** threatens **democratic principles** and **citizens' faith in justice**

## Mass Rapes and Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan's El-Fasher

### Background: Fall of El-Fasher

- **El-Fasher**, the last Sudanese army stronghold in **Darfur**, fell to the **Rapid Support Forces (RSF)** on **October 26, 2025**, after an **18-month siege** marked by starvation and bombardment.
- The fall triggered **mass killings, looting, abductions, and sexual violence**.
- Communications have been largely **cut off**, worsening the information blackout.

### Testimonies of Atrocities

- Survivors like **Amira**, now in **Tawila**, described **public mass rapes**, torture, and killings by RSF fighters.

- Women were raped **in front of families and communities**, creating an atmosphere of terror.
- Those **unable to pay bribes** for safe passage were assaulted or had their **daughters taken** by force.

### Scale of Sexual Violence

- **Doctors Without Borders (MSF):** Over **300 survivors** sought medical care after RSF attacks near **Zamzam camp**, which displaced **380,000 people** earlier.
- **Amnesty International:** RSF uses **sexual violence as a weapon** to humiliate, control, and forcibly displace communities.
- Both **RSF and the Sudanese army** have been accused of conflict-related sexual crimes, with **impunity persisting for two decades**.

### Gruesome Incidents and UN Confirmation

- In **Korma and Garni**, survivors reported:
  - **Nighttime assaults**, torture, and killings.
  - Women raped **at gunpoint**, and girls searched **invasive ways** under the pretext of looting.
  - Men were **slaughtered with knives** in front of families.
- **UN Human Rights Office:** At least **25 women gang-raped** in a displaced persons shelter near **El-Fasher University**.

### Humanitarian Toll

- **65,000 people** have fled El-Fasher since its fall; **5,000** now shelter in **Tawila**, already burdened with **650,000 displaced**.
- Living conditions: makeshift tents, food scarcity, contaminated water, and no medical or psychological aid.

- Survivors suffer from **severe trauma**, especially children who witnessed killings.

### Calls for Global Intervention

- **Local humanitarian groups** and **UN agencies** demand **immediate aid** — food, water, medicine, and trauma counselling.
- Activists urge the **international community** to break the silence and act against **sexual violence as a war tactic**.
- The situation reflects a **failure of global response mechanisms** and the **collapse of accountability** in Sudan's prolonged conflict.

### Broader Implications

- The atrocities underscore a **pattern of gender-based violence** and **impunity** in Darfur's decades-long conflict.
- Without urgent global action, Sudan risks another **Rwanda-like humanitarian disaster**.
- Survivors' testimonies are a **cry for justice and protection**, not just aid.

**Supreme Court Orders Removal of Stray Dogs and Cattle from Public Places**

### Context

- Concerned over the rise in **dog-bite incidents** and **road accidents involving animals**, the Supreme Court issued sweeping directions to all States and UTs to ensure public safety and compliance with the **Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023**.

### Key Directions

#### 1. Removal & Relocation

- Stray dogs to be **removed from** educational institutions, hospitals, bus stands, depots, sports complexes, and railway stations.
- Dogs must be **sterilised and vaccinated** before being moved to **designated shelters**.
- **No re-release** of dogs to the same localities to ensure permanent clearance of such areas.

## 2. Institutional and Local Body Responsibility

- **Municipal bodies** to carry out removals and file **compliance reports within eight weeks**.
- Each institution must appoint a **nodal officer** and conduct **quarterly inspections**.
- **State survey** to identify affected institutions within **two weeks**.

## 3. Cattle and Road Safety

- **NHAI and local authorities** directed to remove **cattle from highways** to prevent accidents.
- Public premises must be **secured with fencing and gates** to prevent animal ingress.

## 4. Public Health & Waste Management

- **Hospitals** to maintain a **constant stock of anti-rabies vaccines**.
- Local bodies to adopt **effective waste-management systems** to reduce stray animal food sources.

## 5. Role of AWBI

- **Animal Welfare Board of India** to frame **uniform SOPs** for dog-bite prevention and stray dog management across States.

## Significance

- Enhances **public safety and accountability** in urban governance.
- Strengthens implementation of **ABC**

**Rules, 2023** through judicial oversight.

- Balances **animal welfare** with citizens' rights and safety

AWBI:

- **Established:** 1962 under *Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960*.
- **Headquarters:** Ballabgarh, Haryana
- **Functions:**
  - Advises the Government on animal welfare laws.
  - Ensures prevention of cruelty in films, entertainment, and sports.
  - Promotes humane stray animal control through **ABC Rules**.
  - Works under the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying**

**Sheikh Hasina Speaks: "You Cannot Disenfranchise Millions and Say You Are Governing by Consent"**

## Context

- Former Bangladesh Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina**, in exile in **India since August 2024**, spoke about her political stance, the interim government led by **Dr. Muhammad Yunus**, and the future of **Bangladesh's democracy**.
- The interview comes amid a tense political climate ahead of the **February 2026 elections** and the **proposed new national charter**.

## Governance and Legitimacy

- Hasina questioned the **legitimacy of the Yunus-led interim government**, calling it *"unconstitutional and*

*unelected.”*

- She argued that **banning the Awami League**, which commands the support of tens of millions, **destroys democratic consent**.
- Quote: *“You cannot disenfranchise millions of people and then claim you are governing by consent.”*

### Elections and Political Ban

- Skeptical of the **2026 election promise**, citing lack of action after 15 months of interim rule.
- Emphasized that any poll without the Awami League’s participation would be **undemocratic and illegitimate**.
- Clarified she did **not call for a boycott**, but noted that **voters will naturally abstain** if their preferred party is banned.
- Called for a **peaceful campaign** and urged the government to **lift the ban** on her party.

### Charges and Judicial Process

- Denounced the **International Crimes Tribunal (ICT)** as politically motivated, alleging it is controlled by her rivals.
- Claimed the charges of *crimes against humanity* are **fabricated**.
- Challenged the government to move the case to the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** for a fair trial.
- Accused the interim regime of **human rights abuses** and **extra-judicial actions** against minorities and Awami League members.

### On the Proposed “July Charter” and Referendum

- Rejected the interim government’s **July Charter** as unnecessary and undemocratic.
- Asserted that **Bangladesh’s existing Constitution** has served well for over

50 years.

- Expressed doubts about the **fairness of the upcoming referendum**.

### Foreign Policy and India–Pakistan Balance

- Supported pragmatic engagement with **Pakistan**, but warned against ignoring **India**.
- Quote: *“Our most important relationship will always be with India.”*
- Urged for **balanced diplomacy**, not rapid normalization that undermines regional trust.

### Exile and Leadership Claim

- Denied resigning before leaving Dhaka.
- Maintained that she **does not recognize the Yunus administration** as legitimate.
- Reaffirmed commitment to **democratic restoration through peaceful means**

## U.S. President’s G-2 Grouping: Implications for Global Allies

### Why in News

U.S. President Donald Trump’s recent reference to a “G-2” with China has revived debates about a possible **U.S.–China duopoly**, raising concerns among allies like India, Japan, and Australia.

### The G-2 Concept: Origin and Evolution

- **Introduced (2005)** by economist **C. Fred Bergsten** of the Peterson Institute for International Economics.
- Proposed **bilateral coordination between the U.S. and China** to stabilize global economic systems post-2008 financial crisis.

- Not meant to replace the **G-20**, but to **pre-coordinate policies** of the two largest economies for smoother global governance.
- The **Obama administration** briefly explored it, but the idea waned as China's global ambitions grew.

### China's Changing Posture

- Under **Xi Jinping**, China moved from Deng's "hide your strength" approach to **assertive nationalism** — in trade, tech, and territorial disputes.
- **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** and rapid **military modernization** challenge U.S. dominance.
- The **2017 U.S. National Security Strategy** under Trump reclassified China as a **strategic competitor**, leading to **trade wars and Indo-Pacific alliances (Quad)**.

### Trump's G-2 Framing: Return of Bilateralism

- The new **G-2 rhetoric** marks a **shift from confrontation to recognition** of China's great-power status.
- Raises fears among allies that **Washington may bypass multilateral frameworks** (e.g., Quad, G20) in favour of direct U.S.–China dealings.
- Could weaken **collective Indo-Pacific deterrence** and embolden China regionally.

### Global Reactions

- **India:** Concerned about marginalisation. Strained by past U.S. tariffs (50%) and Quad uncertainty. Analysts stress that a stable Indo-Pacific is **impossible without India**.
- **Japan & Australia:** Fear reduced U.S. commitment to regional security; view G-2 as a **betrayal of the Quad's purpose**.
- **ASEAN States:** Cautiously optimistic

about reduced U.S.–China tensions but wary of losing **strategic autonomy**.

### Implications for Global Order

- Could lead to **strategic marginalisation** of smaller powers and a **weakened multilateral system**.
- Risks replacing consensus-based global governance with **bipolar decision-making**.
- On the positive side, a temporary U.S.–China thaw might **stabilise trade, climate talks, and technology supply chains**.

## Economics and a Mamdani Model, Big Apple Style

### Context

- Zohran Mamdani, the **first South Asian and Muslim-origin Mayor-elect of New York City (2025)**, has proposed a **welfare-driven governance model** — including **free buses, rent freezes, and universal childcare**.
- The article examines the **economic sustainability of welfarism** in a market-based economy and proposes a "**Rawls-Pareto thermostat**" — balancing compassion with efficiency.

### The Return of Welfarism

- Globally, welfarism is resurfacing as a political tool amid **inequality and exclusive growth** (e.g., Lula in Brazil, Keir Starmer in the UK, Indian CMs' welfare schemes).
- Welfare policies deliver quick results — schooling, housing, mobility — but **risk inefficiency, black markets, and**

**quality erosion** when not backed by fiscal discipline.

## Economics of Welfare: The Core Dilemma

- **Rawlsian view:** Society should be judged by the condition of its **least advantaged**; the State must intervene to ensure equity.
- **Pareto view:** Efficiency and incentives matter; setting prices to zero leads to shortages and poor service quality.
- The tension: **Equity vs. Efficiency, or Compassion vs. Incentives.**

## The “Double Movement” (Polanyi’s Concept)

- Economic history shows oscillation:
  - Market overreach → social protection (Bismarck’s insurance, post-war welfare).
  - Over-protection → liberalisation (Thatcher-Reagan era, India’s reforms).
- Thus, **societies swing between Rawlsian compassion and Pareto efficiency.**

## The Dangers at the Extremes

- **Pareto Trap:** Efficiency fetish — empty clinics, buses on time but unused by the poor.
- **Rawls Trap:** Excessive subsidies — poor quality, exit of middle class, fiscal stress.

## Towards a “Mamdani Model”

The author proposes a **middle path** — a **thermostat** that adjusts between Rawls and Pareto, ensuring fiscal honesty and sustainable inclusion.

## Key Elements:

### 1. Subsidise outcomes, not inputs

- Reward performance (on-time buses, quality childcare).

- Use open data audits and selective fare caps.
- Examples: *Singapore’s Bus Contracting Model (2016)*, *France’s Solidarité Transport*.

### 2. Replace price controls with contingent buffers

- Use **means-tested vouchers** and **automatic stabilisers** during shocks.
- Pair with **zoning reforms, tax incentives**, and **sunset clauses**.

### 3. Cash/e-vouchers + credible public options

- Ensure funding for **quality, staffing, inspections**.
- Prevent service degradation; maintain competition.
- Examples: *Brazil’s Bolsa Família*, *Kenya’s Inua Jamii*.

### 4. Partnership with mission-driven firms

- Encourage **social enterprises** that straddle profit and purpose.
- Example: *Aravind Eye Care, L.V. Prasad Eye Institute* — cross-subsidy models ensuring access + quality.

### 5. Fiscal Honesty & Growth Linkages

- Transparent costing, productivity compacts with industry, and infrastructure expansion (e.g., childcare centres, depots, housing stock).

## Social and Governance Dimension

- Welfare is not just economics — it’s a **politics of dignity**.
- Users = customers with rights (grievance redressal, information access).
- Suppliers = partners with obligations (open books, service standards).

## The “Programmed Oscillation”

- Welfare policy should **adapt to economic cycles**:
  - During crises → **lean Rawlsian** (safety nets, subsidies).
  - During stability → **lean Pareto** (restore prices, improve efficiency).
- This oscillation should be **automatic, not political** — a *programmed adjustment* for resilience

## Why a Socialist Won in the World’s Financial Capital: The Zohran Mamdani Victory

### Context

In a historic political shift, **Zohran Mamdani**, a **Democratic Socialist of Indian-Ugandan origin**, has been elected as the **youngest Mayor of New York City** in over a century.

Defeating **Andrew Cuomo**, an independent backed by Wall Street and billionaire donors, Mamdani’s victory marks the **rise of welfare-state politics in the heart of global capitalism**.

### Background and Identity

- **Age:** 34 years
- **Background:** Born in **Uganda to Indian parents**, raised in the U.S.
- **Affiliation:** Democratic Socialist, associated with the **progressive wing** of the Democratic Party.
- **Ideology:** Advocates for **economic justice, social welfare, and inclusive governance**.
- **Symbolism:** His win signifies both a **generational and demographic transformation** in New York’s

electorate — from elite dominance to grassroots populism.

### Key Promises and Policy Agenda

Mamdani’s platform focuses on **universal access, affordability, and redistribution**, including:

- **Rent freezes and public housing expansion.**
- **Public grocery stores** to tackle food insecurity.
- **Universal childcare and fare-free public buses.**
- **Increased taxation on corporations and millionaires** to fund welfare schemes.

These measures reflect a **Scandinavian-style social democratic model**, adapted for a U.S. urban context.

### Economic and Social Shifts Behind the Mandate

#### 1. Structural Change in Employment

Sector	Share (Earlier)	Share (Now)
Finance, Insurance, Investments	>16%	~13%
Education, Health, Social Assistance	~30%	~40%

A **shrinking financial sector** and **expanding service/labour sectors** have altered the city’s class composition — empowering lower- and middle-income workers who resonated with Mamdani’s message of redistribution and welfare.

#### 2. Demographic Transformation

- Nearly **1 in 4 New Yorkers** is foreign-born.
- **Diverse working-class immigrant communities** form the city's electoral base.
- Mamdani's **immigrant identity and inclusive rhetoric** found strong resonance among these groups.

### 3. Rising Cost of Living

Category	% Increase (NYC)	% National Average
Housing	+68% (FY12–FY22)	Lower
Transportation	+56% (FY13–FY23)	+41.5%
Food	+56%	+46.4%

👉 Only **New York and San Francisco** saw **>55% increase** in all three essential expenses — fuelling discontent and the call for **economic relief policies**

### 4. Voting Behaviour and Class Geography

Borough	Poverty & SNAP Dependence	Lead Margin
Brooklyn, Manhattan, Bronx	High	Mamdani +10%
Staten Island	Low	Cuomo leads
Queens	Moderate	Narrow Mamdani lead

### NYT analysis:

- **57%** of voters in **renter-heavy precincts** supported Mamdani.
- **62%** of **public transport commuters** backed him.
- **Homeowners and car commuters** preferred Cuomo.
- **Interpretation:** Economic status and commuting patterns directly shaped **class-aligned voting behaviour**.

### Political and Symbolic Significance

- Marks a **leftward turn** in urban U.S. politics — from corporate centrism to **grassroots socialism**.
- Demonstrates the **decline of elite political dominance**, symbolized by former mayor **Michael Bloomberg** and the **Cuomo political dynasty**.
- Indicates that **global financial hubs are not immune to populist and redistributive politics**, especially amid widening inequality.
- Sets a precedent for **“progressive urbanism”** — blending fiscal pragmatism with social equity.

### Implications for India and the World

- **Representation:** Mamdani's Indian-origin and Muslim background enhances the **visibility of South Asian diaspora leadership** in Western democracies.
- **Global Left Resurgence:** Reflects a broader post-pandemic shift towards **welfare politics**, seen in movements like **Labour's revival in the UK** and **Sanders-style progressivism** in the U.S.
- **Policy Influence:** Could inspire discussions on **public service delivery, urban housing, and tax equity** even in emerging economies

## Red Fort Blast: Renewed Concerns Over Urban Terror Preparedness

### Why in News

A **high-intensity explosion** outside the historic **Red Fort in central Delhi** killed at **least nine people** and injured over **20 others**, prompting a **nationwide security alert** and a **multi-agency investigation**.

### Incident Overview

- **Time & Location:** Around **6:52 p.m.**, a **slow-moving car** exploded at a **red light near Red Fort** — a high-security, tourist-heavy area.
- **Casualties:** 9 dead, 20+ injured; most victims charred beyond recognition.
- **Immediate Response:** Fire Services, NSG, FSL, and NIA teams deployed; area cordoned off.
- **Suspect:** Car owner detained in **Gurugram**, identity verification underway.

### Government Response

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** visited the injured and announced a **thorough investigation**.
- He stated that **“all possibilities are being explored”**, including **terrorism, sabotage, or accidental causes**.
- **Prime Minister Modi** expressed condolences and directed central agencies to assist Delhi Police.
- **Nationwide alert** sounded, especially for high-profile sites and public events.

### Legal and Investigative Provisions Invoked

1. **Explosive Substances Act, 1908** – governs unlawful manufacture and detonation of explosives.

2. **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA)** – invoked if terror links are established.
3. **Sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)** – including **Sections 302 (murder)** and **120B (criminal conspiracy)**.
4. **National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008** – allows NIA to take over in case of suspected terror involvement.

### Possible Angles Under Probe

- **Terrorism:** Possible link to **transnational or sleeper cells**, including **Islamic State–Khorasan Province (ISKP)** or **Pakistan-based outfits**.
- **Accidental Blast:** Due to **illegal explosives or fuel leak**.
- **Domestic Extremism:** Potential involvement of **local radicalized individuals** or **organized crime syndicates**.

### Security and Intelligence Implications

- The **blast site’s proximity to Red Fort**, a symbol of India’s sovereignty, indicates a **symbolic target selection** — often seen in **terrorist messaging**.
- Raises questions on **urban counter-terror preparedness, intelligence sharing, and CCTV surveillance efficiency**.
- Reinforces need for **vehicle scanning systems** and **AI-based pattern recognition** around critical infrastructure.

### Broader Context

- Delhi has seen similar incidents in the past:

- **2008 Delhi serial blasts** (26 killed).
- **Parliament attack 2001** – targeted national institutions.
- The incident underscores the **persistent vulnerability** of major Indian cities to **asymmetric warfare tactics**.

## Terror Module Busted in J&K: 2,900 kg Explosive Material Seized, 7 Arrested

### Why in News

In a major counter-terror success, the **Jammu & Kashmir Police** have busted an **inter-State and transnational terror module** linked to **Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)** and **Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH)**.

**2,900 kg of IED-making material** and several weapons were seized, with **seven suspects** — including **two doctors and a cleric** — **arrested** across J&K, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh.

### Incident Overview

- **Location:** Multiple locations across **Anantnag, Pulwama, Srinagar, Faridabad, and Saharanpur**.
- **Seizure:** **~2,900 kg of IED-making material**, including urea and ammonium nitrate; **20 timers, batteries, heavy metals, and an assault rifle** recovered.
- **Arrests:** 7 persons arrested — key operatives include:
  - **Dr. Muzammil Ahmad Ganaie (Musaib):** Assistant Professor at Al Falah University, Faridabad.
  - **Dr. Adeel:** From Kulgam, arrested in Saharanpur (UP).
  - **Irfan Ahmad (Maulvi):** Imam from Shopian, linked to radical pamphlet circulation.

### Nature of the Module

- Described as a **“white-collar terror ecosystem”**, involving **educated professionals and radicalised students**.
- **Foreign handlers** based in **Pakistan and other countries** coordinated the module through **encrypted channels**.
- The group was allegedly **recruiting over the last two years**, using religious and ideological indoctrination.

### Trigger Point of the Probe

- The investigation began after **Jaish posters** appeared in **Nowgam, Srinagar (Oct 19)**, threatening security forces.
- Tracing of **pamphlets in Urdu** led to **Shopian-based cleric Irfan Ahmad**, who provided information on the wider network.

### Legal Provisions Invoked

1. **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA)** – sections related to **terrorist acts, membership of banned organisations, and terror financing**.
2. **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)** – sections concerning **criminal conspiracy, waging war against India, and acts endangering sovereignty and integrity**.
3. **Explosives Act, 1884, and Explosive Substances Act, 1908** – for unlawful possession and manufacture of explosives.

### Significance of the Seizure

- One of the **largest recoveries of explosive-making material** in recent years.

- Prevented possible **large-scale terror attacks** in **North India**, including **Delhi and NCR**.
- Indicates the **spread of radicalisation beyond J&K**, with **educated professionals** aiding terror logistics and supply chains.

- Use of **bias-free, transparent data** and clear **liability frameworks** for AI errors.

## Petition in Supreme Court: GenAI May Produce Fake Case Laws

### Why in News

The **Supreme Court** has agreed to hear a petition warning that **unregulated use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)** in judicial work could lead to **“hallucinations”**—fabricated case laws, biased reasoning, and fictitious judgments.

### Key Concerns

- **Fake Case Laws:** GenAI tools may create non-existent precedents or citations that appear real.
- **Bias & Discrimination:** AI trained on biased data could replicate stereotypes, undermining judicial neutrality.
- **Opacity:** Lack of transparency in training data and ownership raises **accountability issues**.
- **Human Rights Impact:** Could threaten **Article 14 (equality)** and **Article 21 (fair procedure)** if unchecked.

### Petitioner’s Demand

Advocate **Kartikeya Rawal** sought:

- Interim **guidelines** till an AI law is enacted.
- **Uniform policy** for AI use in courts and tribunals.

### Supreme Court’s View

CJI **B.R. Gavai** acknowledged judicial awareness of AI’s risks and said **decision-making must remain human-led**, even if AI assists in research and documentation.

### Global & Legal Context

- **EU AI Act (2024):** Classifies judicial AI as “high-risk”, requiring human oversight.
- **U.S. cases:** Lawyers fined for citing AI-generated fake judgments.
- **Constitutional link:** Protects judicial integrity and citizens’ right to accurate information.

### Way Forward

- Draft **Judicial AI Code of Conduct**.
- Mandate **AI transparency audits**.
- Create **legislative safeguards** under a national AI framework.
- Retain **“human-in-the-loop”** for all judicial reasoning

## Inter-State Rivalry that is Fuelling India’s Growth

### Context

- Recently, **Google announced its largest AI data centre in Andhra Pradesh**, triggering political and economic rivalry among southern States.
- Tamil Nadu and Karnataka officials criticized Andhra’s success, but this competition reflects a **positive shift**

toward **competitive federalism** rather than mere political one-upmanship.

## From Central Patronage to Competitive Federalism

### Pre-1991: Command Economy

- Economic power was **centralized in Delhi**.
- Investment decisions depended on **political patronage, not efficiency**.
- States lobbied politicians for industries instead of improving governance.

### Post-1991 Reforms

- Liberalisation dismantled licensing, opened up to global trade and investment.
- Shifted economic agency **from Centre to States**.
- Initially, States adapted slowly, but now they actively compete for investments through:
  - Infrastructure
  - Governance
  - Policy stability
  - Ease of doing business

## Examples of Inter-State Economic Competition

- **Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka:** Tech investments (Google, Micron, Foxconn).
- **Gujarat vs Maharashtra:** Semiconductor projects (Vedanta–Foxconn).
- **Tamil Nadu vs Telangana:** EV manufacturing hubs.

These are signs of a **maturing federal economy**, where economic development is driven by **State-led competition**.

## Lessons from Other Federations

- **United States:**


- Amazon HQ2 project drew bids from 200+ cities.
- Though criticized as a “subsidy race,” it improved local governance and urban infrastructure.

- **Germany:**

- Länder compete for high-tech industry (e.g., Bavaria’s rise as innovation hub).

- **Australia & Canada:**

- Competition among States and provinces for mining, clean energy, and tech hubs.

 **Result:** Competition drives innovation, governance, and efficiency.

## India’s Competitive Federalism in Action

- The **Centre encourages this rivalry** through rankings such as:
  - *Ease of Doing Business Index*
  - *Startup Ecosystem Rankings*
  - *Export Preparedness Index*
- States now serve as **“entry points” to India:**
  - Andhra Pradesh – Ease of business
  - Tamil Nadu – Skilled labour
  - Gujarat – Infrastructure
  - Punjab – Entrepreneurship
  - Jharkhand – Minerals
  - Uttar Pradesh – Emerging industrial hub

Together, they make India a **federation of opportunity**.

## Cautions and Risks

- Risk of a **“race to the bottom”** — reckless subsidies, tax breaks, and land giveaways that may:
  - Distort markets
  - Harm fiscal stability

- Healthy competition should be **competence-based**, not concession-based.

altered content) can mislead users, harm reputations, and threaten public trust.

## Virtuous Policy Cycle

- One State's reform provokes imitation:
  - Single-window clearance (Andhra → others)
  - EV policies (Tamil Nadu → Telangana → Gujarat)
- Cross-State learning fuels **policy diffusion** — hallmark of vibrant federalism.

## Global Opportunity: The China+1 Moment

- As global supply chains diversify, **States are India's true competitors.**
- Investors don't come to "India" abstractly — they invest in **Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, or Bhopal.**
- India competes **globally through its States.**

## The New Federal Compact

- India has moved from:
  - **"Permission-based"** (Delhi decides everything)
  - to **"Persuasion-based"** (States pitch to investors).
- States no longer depend on **central patronage**, but on **policy credibility, innovation, and performance**

## Fine-tuning the AI Labelling Regulations Framework

### Context and Trigger

- A **viral AI-generated video** of Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** endorsing a fake investment scheme led to a **₹66 lakh fraud** in Uttarakhand.
- Such *deepfakes* highlight how **synthetic media** (AI-generated or

## Regulatory Background

- The **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** are being amended.
- **Proposed changes:**
  - Require **Significant Social Media Intermediaries (SSMIs)** — e.g., YouTube, Instagram, X — to **label synthetic or AI-generated content** clearly.
  - Aim: Make digital spaces transparent and trustworthy.

## Key Issues and Challenges

### 1. Ambiguity in Definition

- *Synthetic media* = content *artificially created, modified, or generated* to appear authentic.
- However, not all computer-generated or edited content is *AI-based* — hence, **definitional ambiguity** can over-regulate benign content.
- Example: CGI in films ≠ Deepfake in politics.
- Over 50% of online content is now **AI-generated** → blanket regulation is impractical.

### 2. Effectiveness of Labelling

- The rules require labels on **10% of video area or duration**, but:
  - Short disclaimers may be **ignored like fine print.**
  - Long disclaimers may **overwhelm or distract.**
- Needs **principle-based**, not numeric, regulation — **technology-neutral and future-proof.**

### 3. Reliability of Watermarks

- AI firms promise **digital watermarks**, but these are easily **removed by new tools**.
- Hence, **labelling standards need fine-tuning**:
  - Introduce a **tiered-labelling system**:
    - *AI-generated* → Fully synthetic
    - *AI-assisted* → Human with AI support
    - *AI-altered* → Modified real content

- Out of 516 AI-generated test posts:
  - Only **30% correctly labelled** across Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, TikTok, Pinterest.
  - **Google & Meta** failed to label content from their own AI tools.
  - **Pinterest** was best performer (55%).

### Graded Compliance & Role of Creators

- Current draft focuses mainly on **platforms**, but **creators** are key players too.
- Many creators use AI for voice cloning, avatars, or storytelling — **without disclosure**.

### Suggested approach:

- **Graded compliance** based on influence:
  - High-follower creators → mandatory disclosure.
  - Small creators → voluntary self-labelling.
- Promotes **transparency, public trust, and regulatory adaptability**.

### Verification and Enforcement Gaps

- Platforms must **ask users to label synthetic media** and **verify accuracy**.
- But synthetic media grows faster than detection tech.

### Evidence of inefficacy:

- Audit by *Indicator (2024)*:

### Reliance on:

- **C2PA (Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity)** standards — still evolving.
- **Third-party detection tools** — accuracy depends on data quality.

### Way Forward: Multi-Stakeholder Model

1. **Tiered-Labelling Framework**
  - Clear distinction between *AI-generated*, *AI-assisted*, and *AI-modified*.
2. **Graded Compliance**
  - Based on influence and scale of content creators.
3. **Third-Party Verification Ecosystem**
  - Independent **fact-checkers and digital auditors** can supplement automated systems.
4. **Adaptive, Principle-Based Regulation**
  - Avoid prescriptive technical mandates.
  - Make the law **technology-neutral, flexible, and human-centric**.
5. **Public Awareness & Digital Literacy**
  - “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.”
  - Empower users to **discern authenticity** — crucial for India’s digital democracy.

## Broader Ethical and Governance Dimensions

Dimension	Issue	Implication
Ethical	Consent, authenticity, manipulation	Trust deficit in information ecosystem
Legal	Enforcement of IT Rules, liability of intermediaries	Need for clarity on jurisdiction & accountability
Technological	Deepfake detection, watermarking	AI arms race between creators & regulators
Societal	Electoral misinformation, financial scams	Threat to democracy & consumer safety

### Conclusion

“The adage, ‘If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is,’ is now finding its way into India’s IT laws.”

## Can Lawyers Break Client Confidentiality?

### Context & Background

- The **Supreme Court of India** reaffirmed that a lawyer **cannot be summoned** merely to disclose what their client has communicated — **unless** the communication involves a **crime or illegal act**.
- The judgment came after an *Ahmedabad ACP* summoned a defence lawyer under **Section 179 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023**, seeking “true details” in

a case where he represented the accused.

### What Are Privileged Communications?

- Privileged communication** refers to confidential exchanges between specific relationships (lawyer-client, spouses, etc.) that **cannot be compelled as evidence** in court.
- The **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), 2023** codifies these protections under **Sections 128–134**.

### Key Examples:

- Section 128** – Protects *marital communications*.
- Section 129** – Protects *State affairs* (unpublished official records).
- Section 132** – Protects *advocate-client communications*.

### Section 132 – Advocate–Client Privilege

A lawyer **cannot disclose** any professional communication even after employment ceases, **except** in three cases:

- Client consents** to the disclosure.
- The **communication was made for an illegal purpose**.
- The **advocate observes a crime being committed** during employment.

This ensures that even if the client is an accused, the **State cannot force the lawyer to betray confidence**.

### Supreme Court’s Ruling – Core Observations

- Compelling a lawyer to disclose client communication **violates the right to a fair trial (Article 21)** and the **right against self-incrimination (Article 20(3))**.

- The **privilege belongs to the client**, but the lawyer's **duty of silence** ensures its protection.
- The Court declared the advocate to be a "**constitutional actor**" — not a mere private representative, but a key part of the **constitutional machinery of justice**.
- **Police summons cannot override this privilege** unless clear evidence of illegality exists.

- Strengthens **citizens' constitutional guarantees** in a democracy increasingly marked by investigative overreach.

## Doctors with Bombs

### The Incident: Red Fort Blast (Nov 10, Delhi)

- At **6:55 pm**, a powerful explosion in a white car near **Red Fort** killed **13 people** and injured **20+**.
- The scene was devastating — shattered metal, dismembered bodies, and chaos on one of Delhi's busiest roads.
- The FIR was filed under **UAPA, Explosive Substances Act**, and sections of the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)**.
- Case transferred to the **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**.

### The Key Suspect: Dr. Umar ul Nabi

- A **doctor from Kashmir**, working at *Al Falah University* in Haryana.
- Died in the blast — believed to be the **mastermind** and driver of the explosive-laden vehicle.
- CCTV shows him entering Delhi at **8:04 am** and conducting reconnaissance at Kashmere Gate, Daryaganj, Sunehri Masjid.
- Officials believe he **panicked** and detonated the bomb prematurely due to improper assembly.

### Why Is Safeguarding This Privilege Important?

- Ensures **trust** between lawyer and client → enables honest disclosure → stronger defence.
- Protects **weaker sections** — victims of sexual violence, undertrials, and the marginalized — who rely on confidential counsel.
- Prevents **State overreach** and misuse of investigation powers.
- Maintains the **independence of the Bar** and **integrity of the justice system**.

### Constitutional Dimension

- By linking Section 132 with **Article 20(3)** (no person shall be compelled to self-incriminate), the SC effectively **constitutionalized legal privilege**.
- It aligns with the **right to effective legal aid** under **Articles 21 and 22(1)** (as recognized in *M.H. Hoskot v. State of Maharashtra* (1978) and *Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar* (1980)).

### Larger Implications

- Sets boundaries for **investigative agencies** under Section 179 of the BNSS — they **cannot summon lawyers** for client information.
- Reasserts **rule of law and separation of roles** between prosecution and defence.

Shows evolution of "**white-collar terrorism**" — educated professionals radicalised through ideology and encrypted networks.

### The White-Collar Terror Module

A rare, disturbing feature of this case: the core group consisted of **doctors and medical professionals**.

### Members Arrested

1. **Dr. Muzammil Ahmad Ganaie** – junior doctor at Al Falah, rented room storing 360 kg explosives.
2. **Dr. Adeel Ahmad Rather** – arrested in Saharanpur.
3. **Dr. Umar ul Nabi** – mastermind, died in the blast.
4. **Dr. Shaheen Saeed** and **Dr. Parvez Saeed Ansari** – alleged support members.
5. Several non-medical co-conspirators (cleric Irfan Ahmad, poster boys, logistics handlers).

### Recoveries

- **360 kg ammonium nitrate**, 12 suitcases of explosive material.
- **AK-Krinkov**, AK-56 rifle, magazines, walkie-talkies, timers, batteries.
- **2,900 kg IED-making material** recovered in total across J&K operations.

### How They Operated

- Used **encrypted channels** for communication and fund transfers.
- Funds raised under the guise of **social/charitable causes**.
- Relocated from Kashmir to **Faridabad/Saharanpur** to avoid scrutiny.

### The Trigger: Posters in Srinagar

- Posters in Urdu warning locals not to cooperate with police appeared in Nowgam (Oct 17).
- A CID officer found them suspicious.
- Investigation into posters → arrests of three youths → cleric Irfan Ahmad → links to all three doctors.
- This seemingly minor event **unravelling a massive terror module**.

### Radicalisation Pathways

Based on investigation:

- **Dr. Umar Nabi** was highly radicalised and indoctrinated the others.
- The cleric was used to “radicalise others”, becoming a recruitment node.
- The doctors allegedly sought to “change the system” and establish **Islamic law**.
- They procured chemicals from open markets using medical knowledge.

### Transnational Linkages

- Visits to **UAE, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye** in 2022 by some members under scrutiny.
- Another doctor’s brother missing, suspected in **Afghanistan**.
- J&K Police issued a **red corner notice**.
- Suspected handler in **Pakistan**.

### Human Cost

- Families of victims devastated:
  - A 23-year-old Nouman died while shopping.
  - A 10-year-old girl waited for her father who never returned.
  - Cab driver Shakir battles for life in ICU.

### Institutional Response

- Case handed to **NIA**.
- Coordination among **Delhi Police, J&K Police, Faridabad Police**.
- Fire Services, local police, hospital systems reacted swiftly.
- University campus now under intense scrutiny

# GENERAL STUDIES - III

- 1. Indian Economy**
- 2. Agriculture And Food**
- 3. Environment And Biodiversity**
- 4. Science And Technology**
- 5. Disaster Management**
- 6. Internal Security**

# Proposed Nuclear Law in India

## Background

- The Indian government is deliberating a new **nuclear Bill** to enable **private sector participation** in nuclear power generation.
- Current nuclear plants can only be built and operated by three public entities:
  1. **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL)**
  2. **Bhartiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Ltd. (BHAVINI)**
  3. **NPCIL-NTPC joint venture – Anushakti Vidyut Nigam Limited (ASHVINI)**
- Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**, in the February 2025 Budget, announced the government's intention to amend:
  - **Atomic Energy Act**
  - **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (2010)**

Objective: Allow **private companies and foreign partners** to build and operate nuclear power plants in India.

## Key Issues Under Deliberation

- **Management of nuclear waste:** Determining whether the private sector or government operators will be responsible for safe disposal.
- **Core research and development:** Whether private players can conduct research in nuclear technologies.
- **Liability alignment:** Bringing India's laws in line with international norms, particularly the **Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC)**, to reduce barriers for foreign suppliers.

## Current Challenges

- **Unlimited liability clauses** in existing laws hinder foreign suppliers from participating in India's nuclear sector.
- Questions remain regarding the **safe disposal of spent nuclear fuel** and **reprocessing** responsibilities.

## Government's Vision

- **Target:** 100 GW of nuclear capacity by **2047**.
- **Methods:**
  - Importing foreign reactors
  - Developing **Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs)** of 220 MW PHWRs
  - Partnerships with private entities providing **land, cooling water, and capital**, while NPCIL ensures **design, operation, and quality assurance**
- **Objective:** Integrate nuclear energy as part of India's broader energy transition:
  - 500 GW non-fossil fuel energy generation
  - 50% energy from renewables by 2030
- **BSRs** are designed to reduce land requirements and can be used as captive power plants near industrial units, aiding **decarbonisation**.

## What the Proposed Nuclear Law is About

The proposed nuclear law aims to **reform India's nuclear sector** by allowing **private and foreign participation** in nuclear power generation while addressing **safety, liability, and waste management** concerns. Its key components include:

1. **Amending the Atomic Energy Act**
  - Permitting private companies to operate nuclear plants

- Enabling research and development in nuclear technology by private players
2. **Amending the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act**
    - Reducing unlimited liability on suppliers
    - Aligning with international conventions like the **CSC**
  3. **Public-Private Partnership Framework**
    - Private entities provide infrastructure and capital
    - Government-owned NPCIL manages design, operation, and maintenance
  4. **Waste and Safety Management**
    - Clarifying responsibilities for nuclear waste disposal and spent fuel reprocessing
  5. **Strategic Goal**
    - Achieve **100 GW nuclear capacity by 2047**
    - Support India's **net-zero and decarbonisation commitments**

- Announced by the **Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences**.

### Key Contribution

- The trio developed a **device that demonstrates “quantum tunnelling”** — a fundamental quantum phenomenon.
- Their experiments offered **greater insight into the quantum world**, where particles behave differently from classical physics expectations.

### About Quantum Tunnelling

- **Quantum tunnelling:** The ability of particles to **pass through barriers** that they cannot cross under classical laws.
- Example analogy: Like a **cricket ball** that sometimes **burrows into the ground instead of bouncing**.
- Normally invisible at macroscopic levels, but the scientists **organized particles** to visibly exhibit this effect.

### The Experiment

- They designed an **electrical circuit** using:
  - **Two superconductors** (materials conducting current with zero resistance).
  - A **thin insulating layer** between them called a **Josephson junction**.
- The circuit allowed them to:
  - Control how particles in superconductors behave **collectively as one quantum particle**.
  - Demonstrate **flow of current without voltage**, showcasing **quantum coherence** in macroscopic systems.

## 2025 Nobel Prize in Physics Winners

- Awarded to **John Clarke, Michel Devoret, and John Martinis**.

**Quantum magnified**  
Nobel for quantum behaviour scaled up

JOHN CLARKE | MICHEL H. DEVORET | JOHN M. MARTINIS

- The laureates proved that entire electrical circuits can obey quantum mechanical laws
- They used Josephson junctions to observe tunnelling and energy quantisation in superconducting circuits
- Their findings underpin superconducting qubits, quantum sensors, and precision measurement technologies

SOURCE: NOBEL PRIZE OUTREACH

### Significance

- Their work deepens understanding of **quantum mechanics** and its **practical applications**.
- Builds on early quantum

discoveries that led to **transistors and silicon chips** — foundations of modern computing.

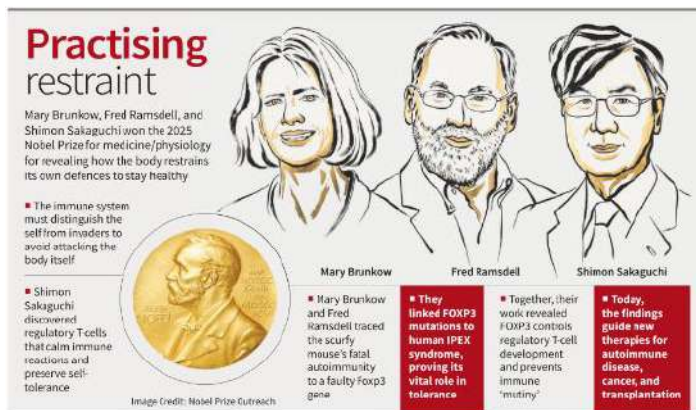
- Could influence **future quantum technologies** like **quantum computing** and **ultra-sensitive sensors**.

### Quote

“It is wonderful to celebrate how century-old quantum mechanics continually offers new surprises and remains enormously useful,” — **Olle Eriksson**, Chair, Nobel Committee for Physics

## 2025 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

### Laureates



- **Mary E. Brunkow, Fred Ramsdell, and Shimon Sakaguchi.**
- Recognized for their pioneering work in understanding **immune tolerance** — how the body prevents its immune system from attacking its own cells.

### Key Discovery

- The trio identified **Regulatory T cells (T-regs)**, a special class of immune cells that **suppress overactive immune responses** and **maintain**

**balance** in the immune system.

- They discovered the **FOXP3 gene**, which plays a **critical role** in the development and function of these T-regs.
- Mutations in the FOXP3 gene lead to severe **autoimmune diseases** such as **IPEX syndrome**, where the immune system attacks multiple organs.

### Scientific Significance

- Their work explains **why the immune system normally does not attack the body's own tissues** — a process known as **peripheral immune tolerance**.
- Understanding this mechanism has revolutionized the study of **autoimmune disorders** and **immune regulation**.

### Medical Applications

- Opens new possibilities for treating **autoimmune diseases** such as **Type-1 diabetes, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis**.
- Provides insights for improving **cancer immunotherapy**, where selective suppression or activation of T-cells is crucial.
- Useful in enhancing **organ transplantation success** by preventing immune rejection.

### Essence of the Discovery

The Nobel-winning work reveals how our immune system's "peacekeepers" — the regulatory T-cells — maintain harmony within the body, preventing it from turning its defenses against itself.

## A Path to Progress That Is Paved with Gold

### Core Theme

- The article argues that **India's next phase of Atmanirbharta (self-reliance)** should focus on **financial self-reliance** by **mobilising domestic wealth**, especially **gold held by households**.
- Emphasizes that **"Bharat can fund Bharat"** — India must rely on its **own capital** rather than volatile foreign investments.

### India's Self-Reliance Journey

- **Green Revolution (1960s):** Achieved food security.
- **Digital revolution (1990s):** Turned talent into national strength.
- **COVID-19 pandemic:** Developed **indigenous vaccines** rapidly.
- **Defence sector today:** Advancing towards **strategic self-reliance**.
- Common lesson: *Every crisis has been converted into capability through Atmanirbharta.*

### The Need for Financial Self-Reliance

- Since 2000, India has received **over \$1 trillion FDI**, but global investment flows are **shrinking**.
- **FDI and FPI** are **volatile** and influenced by external factors.
- As **global capital costs rise** and **protectionism grows**, India must depend more on **domestic capital mobilisation**.

### Gold — The Hidden National Asset

- Indian households collectively hold **around 25,000 tonnes of gold**, worth nearly **\$2.4 trillion (~55% of India's GDP)**.

- Paradox: Despite this wealth, India **imports ~87%** of its gold demand.
- Between 2010–13, gold imports formed **one-third of India's trade deficit**.
- Thus, gold represents both a **challenge (import dependency)** and an **opportunity (domestic capital source)**.

### The Way Forward — Gold Monetisation 2.0

#### a) Infrastructure

- Expand **hallmarking and purity testing centres** for trusted valuation.
- Encourage **formal networks** of collection and testing to integrate unbranded gold.

#### b) Logistics

- **Banks** can handle money flows; **collection centres** can manage gold securely.

#### c) Digitalisation

- Introduce **"metal balance" accounts** allowing depositors to track gold like bank deposits.

#### d) Trust and Simplicity

- Remove frictions such as **GST and customs scrutiny** on gold deposits.
- Build a **"no questions asked"** framework with transparent returns to depositors.

### Economic Rationale

- The **cost of funds** from gold monetisation: **4.5–6.5%**, cheaper than foreign borrowing.
- Benefits:
  - Reduces **import dependency**.
  - Strengthens **current account**.
  - Creates a **domestic capital pool** for infrastructure and innovation.

## Broader Message

- Mobilising gold-based domestic wealth is not merely economic — it is a **civilisational step towards self-reliance**.
- Just as India achieved self-sufficiency in food and technology, it can now achieve **financial self-reliance**.
- This vision embodies the belief that **India's growth can be funded, sustained, and led from within**.

## Concluding Idea

*"The prize is unmistakable — an India that defines its growth on its own terms, self-reliant in spirit and substance."*

## 2025 Nobel Prize in Chemistry: Bridging Metals and Organics

### Winners

- **Richard Robson** – Australia
- **Susumu Kitagawa** – Japan
- **Omar Yaghi** – Jordan–American

They share the prize of **11 million Swedish kronor** (≈ ₹1 crore) for discovering and developing **Metal–Organic Frameworks (MOFs)** — a new class of materials that combine **metal atoms** and **organic molecules**.

### What Are MOFs?

**Metal–Organic Frameworks** are crystalline structures made by linking metal ions with organic compounds to form **porous, sponge-like networks**.

They can:

- Trap, store, or release gases and molecules.
- Be tailored for specific purposes through **"rational design."**

- Work like "molecular sponges" or even "artificial lungs."

### How the Discovery Evolved

1. **Richard Robson (1970s)** – First conceived MOF-like structures while experimenting with metal–organic bonds; formed spacious but unstable crystals.
2. **Susumu Kitagawa (1990s)** – Developed **porous and flexible frameworks**, proving that gases could flow in and out — like "breathing" materials.
3. **Omar Yaghi (2000s)** – Stabilized MOFs and created varieties that could **extract water from desert air** and **store carbon dioxide**.

### Applications

Today, thousands of MOFs are used or being developed for:

- **Carbon capture** and climate solutions

### For the development of metal-organic frameworks



- **Water harvesting** in arid regions
- **Filtering toxic PFAS chemicals** from water
- **Breaking down environmental pollutants**

### Significance

MOFs are considered a **revolution in material chemistry**, bridging the gap

between **metals (rigid)** and **organics (flexible)** — long thought impossible. They represent the next frontier for **AI-driven molecular design**, sustainable technology, and environmental cleanup

## An Anchor for India–U.K. Ties: Economic Partnership

### Context:

British PM *Keir Starmer's* visit to India in October 2025 marks a new phase in bilateral relations, anchored by the signing of the **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)** in July 2025.

### Key Agreements

- **CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement)**
  - Aims to **double India–U.K. trade by 2030**.
  - **India gains:** Lower tariffs on exports like textiles, pharma, and agriculture.
  - **U.K. gains:** Reduced duties on whisky, automobiles, and machinery.
  - Focuses on **market access + strategic cooperation**.
- **Double Contributions Convention (DCC):**
  - Exempts Indian professionals from paying double social security in the U.K. for 3 years.
  - Boosts talent mobility and lowers business costs.
- **Bilateral Investment Treaty (under negotiation):**
  - Will enhance U.K. investment (currently 5% of India's FDI).
  - Encourages collaboration in manufacturing, services, and

technology.

### Strategic Cooperation Framework

- **Vision 2035 Roadmap:** Defence, tech, education, mobility, climate action.
- **Defence Industrial Roadmap (2025):** Joint R&D and co-production of platforms.
- **Technology Security Initiative (TSI, 2024):** Collaboration on AI, quantum tech, semiconductors, and critical minerals.

### Broader Significance

- Strengthens India's role in global value chains amid **shifting trade blocs**.
- For the U.K.: Gateway to Indo-Pacific markets, green finance, and digital innovation.
- For India: Access to advanced tech, investment, and European markets.

### Conclusion

CETA and Starmer's visit mark a **next-generation partnership** — combining trade liberalisation, sustainable investment, tech collaboration, and mobility.

Together, India and the U.K. aim to shape a **resilient, open, and tech-driven global order**.

## 2025 Nobel Prize in Literature: László Krasznahorkai (Hungary)

### Introduction

The **2025 Nobel Prize in Literature** has been awarded to **Hungarian writer László Krasznahorkai**, whose works are celebrated for their **philosophical depth, apocalyptic tone, and artistic intensity**. The Nobel Committee honoured him for his "compelling and visionary oeuvre that,

in the midst of apocalyptic terror, reaffirms the power of art.”

### About the Laureate

- **Name:** László Krasznahorkai
- **Age:** 71
- **Born:** Gyula, southeastern Hungary (near Romania)
- **Education:** Studied Law at the Universities of Szeged and Budapest; later turned to Literature
- **Known for:** Long, stream-of-consciousness sentences and deeply reflective, often bleakly humorous narratives
- **Style:** Philosophical, surreal, absurdist — blending realism with existential reflection

### Notable Works

Year	Title	Themes / Notes
1985	<i>Satantango</i>	His debut novel; explores moral decay and apocalyptic landscapes; adapted into a 7-hour film by Béla Tarr
1989	<i>The Melancholy of Resistance</i>	Allegorical critique of totalitarianism; inspired Tarr’s film <i>Werckmeister Harmonies</i>
2013	<i>Seiobo There Below</i>	Philosophical reflections on art and divinity; won the <i>Best</i>

Year

Title

Themes / Notes

2019

*Baron Wenckheim’s Homecomings*

Translated Book Award

Won the National Book Award for Translated Literature (U.S.); a tragicomic return of a ruined aristocrat

Other works

*War & War, The Prisoner of Urga* (unfinished)

Blend of chaos, politics, and metaphysical despair

### His Literary Signature

- Writes **paragraph-less prose**, with some novels composed as **one single sentence**.
- His work combines **Kafkaesque absurdity, Beckettian despair**, and **Eastern European realism**.
- Captures **the decay of modern civilisation, moral collapse**, and the **search for meaning in chaos**.
- Deeply influenced by **music, visual art, and religious mysticism**.

### Philosophical & Political Dimensions

- Strong critic of **Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s autocratic tendencies** and **nationalism**.
- Sees literature as a **moral resistance to authoritarianism** and a **spiritual act** amidst political decay.
- Believes that in times of despair, **art alone preserves truth**.
- His Nobel reflects how **literature can**

be both political critique and transcendental vision.

### Krasznahorkai in the Central European Tradition

- The Nobel Committee compared him to **Franz Kafka** and **Thomas Bernhard**, calling him  
“a great epic writer in the Central European tradition — characterised by absurdism and grotesque excess.”
- His works continue the European lineage of exploring **oppression, bureaucracy, absurdity, and existential dread** — a mirror to the post-Soviet, postmodern world.

### Critical Reception

- **Booker Prize judges:** Praised his “extraordinary sentences... switching from solemn to madcap to desolate.”
- **Béla Tarr’s** cinematic adaptations (*Satantango*, *Werckmeister Harmonies*) made his vision globally recognisable.
- Readers find his style **demanding yet hypnotic**, blending **madness, faith, and decay** in poetic prose.

### Awards & Recognition

- **Best Translated Book Award (2014)** — *Seiobo There Below*
- **National Book Award for Translated Literature (2019)** — *Baron Wenckheim’s Homecoming*
- **Man Booker International Prize (2015, finalist)** — For his overall contribution
- **Nobel Prize in Literature (2025)** — For reaffirming “the power of art amid apocalyptic terror”

## Why We Need to Change the Way We Talk About Antibiotic Resistance

**Background:** How AMR Entered the Public Discourse

- The **NDM (New Delhi Metallo-beta-lactamase)** discovery in 2010 triggered political and media attention.
- This led to initiatives like the **Chennai Declaration**, which shaped India’s national response to AMR.
- Initially, **fear-based messaging** (“collapse of healthcare by 2050”, “10 million deaths”) worked — it shocked policymakers into action.
- But over time, **repetition led to desensitization** — a phenomenon called *habituation* and *psychic numbing* (Paul Slovic).

### Communication Fatigue: When Numbers Stop Working

- The **O’Neill Report (2016)** projected catastrophic figures — 10 million annual deaths, \$100 trillion losses.
- These numbers once helped position AMR as an *economic and political* issue, not just a medical one.
- But now, the public, media, and even doctors are **numb** to these statistics.
- **Quote:** “Statistics are human beings with the tears wiped off.” — Paul Brodeur
- AMR discourse has lost its *human connection*.

### Making it Personal: From Global Threat to Individual Body

- We must reframe the narrative to focus on the *present* and the *personal*:
  - The **microbiome** — trillions of

bacteria, viruses, fungi that live symbiotically within us — is central to our health.

- **Antibiotics**, while life-saving, can disrupt this ecosystem for months, sometimes permanently.
- These disruptions affect:
  - Gut–brain axis → anxiety, depression
  - Gut–lung axis → asthma, respiratory infections
  - Metabolism → obesity, diabetes
  - Skin & immunity → eczema, allergies

Thus, **AMR isn't just about dying in 2050 — it's about living less healthily today.**

### The Fragrance Metaphor: The Good Bugs Story

- Microbes shape even *how perfume smells on our skin* — bacteria interact with fragrance molecules, creating unique scents.
- This story reveals microbes as partners in individuality, beauty, and daily life — not just disease agents.
- By telling such *positive microbial stories*, we can humanize the AMR issue.

### The Message Shift: From Fear to Responsibility

Instead of saying:

“Antibiotics cause resistance.”

We can say:

“Antibiotics can harm your good microbes. Protect your microbiome — it protects you.”

This new framing:

- Invokes **personal agency** rather than **fear**.

- Builds **hope** instead of **helplessness**.
- Connects people emotionally to the issue.

### The Broader Shift in Communication Paradigm

Old Narrative	New Narrative
Fear and catastrophe	Awareness and empathy
Global collapse	Individual impact
Resistance (war metaphor)	Resilience (biological metaphor)
Statistics	Stories
Distant 2050	Everyday 2025

**From:** “The world will collapse”

**To:** “Your body’s balance depends on how you use antibiotics.”

### Conclusion: Reclaiming the Human Story

AMR communication must evolve to:

- Integrate **science with emotion, biology with storytelling**.
- Promote **responsible antibiotic use** through *connection*, not *fear*.
- Keep AMR on public and political agendas by making it **personally meaningful**.

**Final message:**

From resistance in hospitals to resilience in bodies.

From global catastrophe to personal consciousness.

From fear to fragrance.

## Green Crackers in Delhi: Between Eco-Friendly

### Overview

Delhi's attempt to promote "green crackers" for a cleaner Diwali faces challenges from weak enforcement, counterfeit products, and lingering doubts over their actual environmental benefit.

### Judicial and Regulatory Background

- The Supreme Court's 2018 Arjun Gopal judgment permitted only low-emission "green crackers."
- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) later imposed an absolute ban on firecrackers in polluted areas.
- From 2021 onward, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has enforced annual and eventually year-round bans.
- In 2025, the SC allowed certified manufacturers to produce green crackers but continued prohibiting their sale in Delhi-NCR.

### What Are Green Crackers?

Developed by CSIR-NEERI, green crackers emit 30–40% fewer pollutants than conventional ones.

They avoid toxic substances like barium nitrate, arsenic, and lead, and use cleaner formulations to reduce smoke, particulate matter, and noise.

#### Key Variants:

- SWAS (Safe Water Releaser)
- STAR (Safe Thermite Cracker)
- SAFAL (Safe Minimal Aluminium)

### Concerns and Effectiveness

- Studies show that even green crackers release dangerous ultra-fine particles harmful to health.
- Experts argue that combustion-based fireworks can never be fully

eco-friendly.

### Regulation and Misuse

- Genuine green crackers carry a CSIR-NEERI logo and encrypted QR code for traceability.
- Only PESO-approved manufacturers and licensed vendors can sell them.
- However, Delhi lacks testing labs and inspection systems, enabling fake "green" crackers with cloned QR codes to flood the market.

### Conclusion

While green crackers were introduced as a sustainable alternative, Delhi's poor enforcement and counterfeiting issues undermine their purpose. Without strict verification and public awareness, their promise of an eco friendly Diwali remains largely unrealized.

## Arctic Seals and Birds Added to IUCN Red List of Endangered Species

### Context

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) released an updated Red List of Threatened Species at the World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, highlighting growing threats to Arctic seals and global bird populations due to climate change and human activity.

### Key Findings

#### 1. Overall Update

- The Red List now includes 172,620 species, of which 48,646 are threatened with extinction.
- The update reflects the increasing human impact on biodiversity and climate.

#### 2. Arctic Seals

- Hooded seal: Status changed from Vulnerable → Endangered.
- Bearded and harp seals: Now listed as Near Threatened.
- Main threats: Rapid Arctic warming, loss of sea ice, shipping, oil and gas extraction, and industrial fishing.
- The Arctic is warming four times faster than the global average, drastically reducing sea ice cover.
- Seals are keystone species—vital for nutrient recycling and as food for higher predators.

### 3. Bird Populations

- 61% of global bird species show declining populations, up from 44% in 2016.
- Of 11,185 species assessed, 1,256 (11.5%) are globally threatened.
- Major threats: Deforestation, logging, and agricultural expansion.

### Regional concerns:

- Madagascar: 14 species now Near Threatened, 3 upgraded to Vulnerable.
- West Africa: 5 new species Near Threatened.
- Central America: 1 species added to Near Threatened category.

### Positive Development

- Green Turtle: Moved out of Endangered category after population recovery of 28% since the 1970s due to decades of conservation action.
- Experts warned this should encourage continued conservation, not complacency

## A Green Transition Accelerating at Express Speed

### Context

The successful trial of India's first

hydrogen-powered coach (July 2025) marks a major milestone in Indian Railways' green transition. As one of the world's largest rail networks, Indian Railways aims to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 — four decades ahead of India's national target.

### Key Initiatives and Achievements

#### 1. Electrification and Renewable Integration

- 45,000 km of broad gauge network electrified in the last decade; 98% now electrified.
- Installed capacity: 553 MW solar, 103 MW wind, 100 MW hybrid (total 756 MW).
- 2,000+ stations powered by solar; some railway buildings certified —Shunyall (net-zero).
- Launch of "Hydrogen for Heritage" initiative to deploy 35 hydrogen powered units.

#### 2. Operational Measures

- Shift freight from road to rail to raise modal share to 45% by 2030.
- Use of biofuels, construction of green buildings, and Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs) expected to avert 457 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over 30 years.
- Focus on energy efficiency and technological innovation.

### Green Finance Architecture

#### 1. Government Initiatives

- Since FY2023, ₹58,000 crore sovereign green bonds issued; ₹42,000 crore allocated to transport projects (locomotives, metros, suburban rail).
- Integrating climate objectives within capital budgeting.

#### 2. Institutional Role

- Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) issued a \$500 million green bond (2017) for electric locomotives.

- Recently extended a ₹7,500 crore loan to NTPC Green Energy for renewable capacity.

transformation without compromising fiscal prudence.

### 3. Multilateral Support

- World Bank (2022): \$245 million loan for the Rail Logistics Project to improve freight infrastructure and reduce emissions.

**India's Trade Deficit Widens 93% in September 2025: Services Slowdown the Key Driver**

### Challenges and Next Steps

#### 1. True Decarbonisation

- Electrification must be backed by renewable power sourcing, not coal heavy grids.
- Need for long-term renewable purchase agreements with solar/wind producers.

#### 2. Green Last-Mile Connectivity

- Develop multi-modal green hubs integrating electric buses, cycles, and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Use electric/LNG/hydrogen vehicles for freight connectivity.

#### 3. Rolling Stock Innovation

- Hydrogen fuel cell trains for non-electrified and heritage lines.
- Lightweight, aerodynamic coaches and AI-based energy optimization to enhance efficiency.

#### 4. Behavioural Change

- Introduce green certification for trains, carbon labelling for freight, and public awareness drives to make passengers active participants in climate action.

### Key Highlights

#### • Trade Deficit:

India's trade deficit nearly **doubled (↑93%)** in **September 2025** to **\$16.6 billion**, compared to **\$8.6 billion** in September 2024.

➤ Cause: Imports rose faster than exports.

#### • Exports vs. Imports (September 2025):

- **Exports:** \$67.2 billion (↑0.8% YoY)
- **Imports:** \$83.8 billion (↑11.3% YoY)

#### • Goods vs. Services Performance:

- **Goods exports:** ↑6.7% → \$36.4 billion
- **Services exports:** ↓5.5% → \$30.8 billion

➤ The fall in **services exports**, traditionally India's strength, led to overall weakness.

#### • Tariff Impact:

Despite the U.S. imposing **50% tariffs** on Indian imports, merchandise exports remained **resilient**, showing industrial adaptability.

#### • U.S. Export Trend:

- Cumulative exports (Apr–Sep 2025): ↑13.4% YoY
- But monthly exports declined from **\$8.8B (May) → \$5.5B (Sep)**, indicating weakening momentum.

### Impact and Potential

- Achieving net-zero by 2030 could prevent 60 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually, equal to removing 13 million cars from the roads.
- Fuel cost savings: over ₹1 lakh crore by 2030.
- Proves that large state-run transport systems can achieve low-carbon

## Cumulative FY2025 (April–September) Performance

- **Total Exports:** \$413.3 billion (↑4.45%)
- **Total Imports:** \$472.8 billion (↑3.55%)
- **Trade Deficit:** Shrunk by **2.3%** compared to H1 FY2024.

## Official Viewpoint

- **Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal** highlighted:
  - Industry resilience in maintaining supply chains despite global turbulence.
  - Trade deficit spike seen as **seasonal and not structural**.
  - Exports to tariff-affected markets still showing positive cumulative growth.

## Analytical Insight

- The **sharp widening** in September is a **short-term fluctuation**, largely due to:
  - Decline in **services exports** (IT, BPO, consultancy).
  - Lagged impact of **global demand slowdown** and **tariff uncertainties**.
- The **resilience of goods exports** despite tariff barriers suggests:
  - Diversified export base and adaptive pricing strategies.
  - Possible **absorbing of tariff costs** by Indian exporters to retain market share.

## Broader Implications

- **Short Term:** Temporary stress on current account balance (CAB).
- **Medium Term:**
  - Need to **diversify export destinations** and boost services competitiveness.

- Strengthen domestic manufacturing to reduce import dependency.

- **Policy Cue:** Trade resilience amid protectionist pressures reinforces India's position as a **stable global trade partner**

## Evolution, Revolution — The Economics Nobel 2025

### Context

The **2025 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences** has been awarded to **Philippe Aghion, Peter Howitt, and Joel Mokyr** for their contributions to understanding **innovation-driven economic growth**. Their work collectively explores how human creativity, competition, and institutions shape long-term prosperity.

### Core Contributions

#### Mokyr's Historical and Cultural Context

- **Joel Mokyr** provides a **historical explanation** for humanity's technological and cultural leap in the last two centuries.
- He links economic progress to **cultural openness, intellectual freedom, and social acceptance of innovation**.

#### Aghion & Howitt's Creative Destruction Model

- **Aghion and Howitt (1990s)** formalised **Schumpeter's concept of "creative destruction"** — innovation constantly replaces old technologies, firms, and industries.

- Their **Endogenous Growth Theory** posits that growth arises from **internal factors** like innovation, education, and R&D — not external capital accumulation.
- It assumes **free markets, open competition, and minimal state intervention** as key to sustained growth.

## The 'Critical Factor' in India's Clean Energy Ambitions

### Relevance and Critique

#### Limits of the Model

- The model's assumptions clash with historical realities — **state-led innovation** (e.g., Soviet Union, China) has also driven progress.
- It doesn't fully explain **technological leaps** in **non-liberal economies** or address **inequality and geopolitical disruptions**.

#### Contemporary Irony

- The Nobel arrives as **global openness** and **scientific freedom** are under threat —
  - **Protectionism,**
  - **Weaponised trade,** and
  - **Politicisation of technology** under leaders like **Donald Trump**.
- The award, therefore, symbolically reaffirms faith in **freedom, competition, and innovation** as the foundations of prosperity.

#### Broader Significance

- The recognition serves as a **reminder to liberal democracies**: sustaining progress requires **institutional freedoms, academic independence,** and a **balanced role of the state** in enabling — not constraining — innovation

#### Context

India's clean energy and net-zero targets depend crucially on **critical minerals** — lithium, cobalt, and **Rare Earth Elements (REEs)** — that power electric vehicles (EVs), solar panels, wind turbines, and energy storage. Securing these minerals is essential for India's energy independence, industrial growth, and technological sovereignty.

#### Significance of Critical Minerals

- India aims for **500 GW of renewable energy by 2030** and **net-zero emissions by 2070**.
- Critical minerals form the **backbone of green technologies** — EV batteries, wind turbines, and solar modules.
- The **EV market** in India is expected to grow at **49% CAGR (2023–2030)**, driven by government initiatives such as the **Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS) 2024**.
- India's **battery storage market** (valued at \$2.8 billion in 2023) is poised to surge with renewable energy expansion.

#### The Supply Challenge

- India imports **~100% of its lithium, cobalt, nickel** and **90% of its REEs**, creating **strategic vulnerabilities**.
- **China's dominance** — 60% of REE production and 85% of processing capacity — exposes India to supply risks amid geopolitical tensions.

- **Dependence on imports** threatens **energy security, industrial competitiveness, and Atmanirbhar Bharat** goals.

## Domestic Resource Potential and Policy Measures

- **Exploration Initiatives:**
  - **Lithium:** Found in **Jammu & Kashmir** (5.9 million tonnes inferred) and **Rajasthan**.
  - **REEs:** Concentrated in **Odisha** and **Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Policy Reforms:**
  - **National Mineral Exploration Policy (NMEP), 2016** — promotes private exploration using advanced technology.
  - **MMDR Amendment Act, 2021 & 2023** — opened mining to private players, simplified licensing.
  - **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)** — ₹34,300 crore plan for exploration, mining, and recycling.

## Building Supply Chain Resilience

### Domestic Mining and Processing

- Mining contributes only **2.5% to India's GDP** vs. **13.6% in Australia**.
- Needs **regulatory simplification, financial incentives (PLIs, tax breaks), and environmental clearances**.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)** can bridge technology and capital gaps in refining and processing.

### Strategic PSUs and Overseas Acquisitions

- **NMDC** exploring entry into critical minerals.
- **IREL (India) Ltd.** preparing to extract neodymium, praseodymium, dysprosium.

- **KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd.)**, set up in 2019, must **expedite overseas asset acquisitions** for supply security.

## The Circular Economy Approach

- India generates **4 million tonnes of e-waste** annually — only **10% recycled formally**.
- **E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022** and **Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022** promote recycling but face weak enforcement.
- **Urban mining** and **recycling hubs** can recover lithium, cobalt, and REEs — cutting import dependence.
- Recycling aligns with **sustainability and resource efficiency** under the **circular economy** model.

## Way Forward

1. **Operationalise mining leases** quickly and incentivise private investments.
2. **Upgrade mining infrastructure** with automation, mechanisation, and sustainable practices.
3. **Strengthen research** on mineral substitutes and eco-friendly extraction.
4. **Develop recycling networks** and **urban mining clusters**.
5. **Enhance global partnerships** through KABIL for resource diversification.
6. Ensure **policy stability, environmental safeguards, and community participation**.

## Data Darkness in the United States Spreads a Shadow Across the Globe

### Context

The recent **U.S. government shutdown** has halted the release of official economic data, triggering global concerns. Policymakers worldwide depend on U.S. indicators to gauge economic health, trade trends, and inflation. The episode reflects **deeper governance and institutional trust issues** in the United States.

### Global Ripples of Data Blackout

- The U.S. produces around **one-fourth of global GDP** (~\$30 trillion).
- Countries like **Japan and the U.K.** rely heavily on U.S. statistics for monetary and trade decisions.
- The **Bank of Japan** and **Bank of England** expressed concern, with officials calling the data freeze “a serious problem.”
- The situation risks **policy errors** globally, especially amid volatile trade, inflation, and geopolitical tensions.

### Institutional Fragility and Political Pressure

- The shutdown coincides with President **Donald Trump’s attempts to influence the Federal Reserve** and dismiss officials over unfavourable data.
- The **IMF and World Bank** warned that such interference could **erode trust in data institutions**, undermining central bank autonomy.

- The **World Economic Outlook (IMF)** noted that political pressure may “erode hard-won public confidence” and increase the risk of **policy mistakes** due to compromised data quality.

### Economic and Governance Implications

- Though private data services and the U.S. Fed continue limited analysis, reliance on unofficial data weakens **transparency and credibility**.
- Analysts like **Adam Posen** (Peterson Institute) caution that this contributes to **skepticism about U.S. governance**, possibly affecting **reserve currency status** and **global financial stability**.
- The event mirrors a broader decline in **institutional independence, data reliability, and technocratic governance** in America.

### Global Economic Outlook

- Despite the turbulence, the **IMF** raised global growth projections slightly to **3.2%** for 2025, showing resilience amid uncertainty.
- Yet, the “data darkness” underscores how **U.S. domestic disruptions** can cast **systemic shadows across the global economy**

## Trump–Modi Discord over Russian Oil Imports

### Context

- U.S. President **Donald Trump** claimed that **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** had promised to stop importing oil from Russia “soon”.
- However, India’s **Ministry of External**

Affairs (MEA) denied that such a conversation had taken place.

## The Core Disagreement

- **Trump's Claim:** India assured the U.S. it would phase out Russian oil imports soon.
- **MEA's Response:**
  - Denied any discussion on oil in recent Modi–Trump talks.
  - Reiterated that India's policy is to **diversify and broad-base energy sources** to meet market needs.
- India's official line: *Energy security and consumer interest come first.*

## Background

- Russian oil became a **major source for India** post-Ukraine war, due to discounted prices.
- However, **U.S. tariffs and sanctions** have complicated India's oil trade.
- Reports show Indian public sector oil firms **reduced Russian imports by ~45%** between June–September, though Russia remains India's top supplier.

## Diplomatic Friction

- Trump's remarks embarrassed the Indian government, suggesting it had "yielded" to U.S. pressure.
- The MEA's careful language reflects India's **strategic balancing** — maintaining ties with both Washington and Moscow.
- Trade negotiations between India and the U.S. are reportedly **stuck**, partly over this oil issue.

## Broader Reactions

- **China** defended its right to buy Russian oil, accusing the U.S. of

"unilateral bullying".

- MEA criticized **U.K. sanctions on Nayara Energy** (Rosneft-owned refinery in India), rejecting "double standards" in energy trade.

## FSSAI Bans Misuse of 'ORS' Label: Only WHO-Approved Formulas Allowed

### Context

- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has barred all food companies from using the term "**Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS)**" on their products unless the formulation **strictly adheres to WHO standards.**
- The move follows a **decade-long campaign** by Hyderabad-based paediatrician **Dr. Sivaranjani Santosh**, who exposed deceptive marketing of sugary drinks as ORS.

### What the New Order Says

- **No brand** can use "ORS" or "Oral Rehydration Salts" in its name or label **unless WHO composition standards are met.**
- **Earlier permissions withdrawn:**
  - **July 14, 2022**, and **February 2, 2024** orders allowed "ORS" in trademarks (with disclaimers).
  - These permissions are **now rescinded.**
- Applies to **fruit-based, non-carbonated, or ready-to-drink** products misusing the ORS tag.

## Why the Ban Was Needed

- Many beverages were labelled as “ORS” or “energy drinks” with misleading claims.
- Such drinks often contained **high sugar content** and **failed to meet WHO’s therapeutic electrolyte-sugar ratio**.
- Misleading labelling **endangered children’s health** by substituting real medical ORS with sugary beverages.

## Legal Basis

- Violations under the **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**, for:
  - False or deceptive labelling.
  - Misleading name declarations.
  - Breach of consumer protection standards.
- FSSAI termed such labelling “**false, deceptive, ambiguous, and erroneous.**”

## Citizen Action Impact

- **Dr. Sivaranjani Santosh’s campaign**—spanning nearly a decade—was pivotal.
- Her advocacy led to **judicial scrutiny** and **regulatory tightening**.
- The case highlights the **power of professional activism** in strengthening public health policy.

## Broader Significance

- Marks a major step in **consumer protection and public health regulation**.

- Prevents **corporate misuse of medical terms** for profit.
- Reinforces **trust in public health labelling** and **WHO-aligned medical standards**

## 210 Maoists lay down arms in Chhattisgarh

### Key Highlights

**Historic surrender:** In an unprecedented move, 210 Maoist cadres from the Dandakaranya region surrendered in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh — the largest-ever such event in India’s anti-Naxal campaign.

#### Who surrendered:

Included Rupesh alias Satish, a Central Committee member of the banned CPI (Maoist) — among the most senior leaders to surrender in recent years.

#### Ceremony details:

- Held in Jagdalpur, Bastar headquarters.
- The surrender was symbolic and community-driven — the Maoists were welcomed with roses by tribal leaders instead of formally handing over weapons to officials.
- No media interaction or major political presence; the ceremony projected as a social reintegration, not merely a security event.

### Statements and Reactions

**Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai:** Called it a “new beginning of trust, transformation, and life,” praising the cadres for embracing the Indian Constitution.

#### Deputy CM Vijay Sharma:

Announced that northwestern Bastar is now Naxal-free.

- Rupesh (surrendered leader): In a pre-event interview, said they were surrendering due to “changed circumstances,” not abandoning their struggle.
- He also placed specific demands, including:
- Surrendered cadres should not be forced to join the District Reserve Guards (DRG), the local anti-Naxal force.
- Addressing broader tribal issues in Bastar. The government reportedly accepted some of these demands in line with policy.

### National Context

#### PM Narendra Modi’s remarks:

- Declared that India is close to being free of Maoist terror, with 303 Naxal operatives surrendering in the past 75 hours.
- Said only three districts remain under Left Wing Extremism (LWE).
  - Asserted that LWE will soon be history, calling it a “guarantee”.
  - Highlighted decades of violence that hindered education, health, and infrastructure in affected areas.
  - Symbolically stated that regions once under Maoist influence would now “celebrate Diwali after 60–70 years”.

Shelley Walia critiques the hypocrisy of modern immigration politics, especially in the U.S., where nations built on colonisation and forced migration now deny entry to today’s migrants. She urges a historical reckoning with colonial violence to build a humane and inclusive migration policy.

### Historical Irony

- Columbus’s “discovery” of America in 1492 began an era of colonisation, genocide, and enslavement, not discovery.
- Indigenous civilisations like the Arawaks and Iroquois Confederacy were destroyed, their cultures erased under the guise of civilisation.
- The U.S., a nation forged by violent migration and slavery, now weaponises immigration politics.

### Myth of American Exceptionalism

- Successive U.S. governments glorify their past while ignoring colonial atrocities.
- The “Columbus myth” fuels white supremacy and racial capitalism, justifying centuries of expansionism and present-day imperialism.

### Continuity of Exclusion

- Modern policies — border wall, Muslim ban, family separation — under Trump institutionalised cruelty and xenophobia.
- Immigrants are depicted as threats rather than victims of war, poverty, or climate crises created by global inequalities.

### Historical Amnesia

- The misuse of “Geronimo” (Apache

## Rethinking Immigration in the Age of Exclusion — Shelley Walia

### Central Argument

leader) as a codename for Osama bin Laden's killing symbolises America's erasure of Indigenous resistance.

- History remembers conquerors but silences victims — selective memory sustains injustice.

### Moral Paradox

- Nations built on migration now criminalise mobility.
- The contrast between glorified colonial “pioneers” and vilified modern migrants exposes deep-rooted racism and power asymmetry.

### Call for a New Ethic

- Migration is a fundamental human right, not a privilege.
- Policies must be grounded in historical accountability, human dignity, and global justice.
- Reimagining a world “without Columbus” means envisioning one without conquest, hierarchy, or exclusion.

### Essence

The essay redefines immigration not as a threat, but as a moral and historical necessity — urging the Global North to confront its colonial past before denying entry to those displaced by its legacy

## Engage the Taliban, don't recognise them

### Overview

The editorial argues that **India should engage with the Taliban but stop short of recognising them**. While the changing Afghanistan–Pakistan dynamic offers India new opportunities, formal recognition of the Taliban would be risky given their unchanged ideology, repression, and

terrorist linkages.

### India, Pakistan, and the Taliban Triangle

The Taliban, once Pakistan's clients, are now in power and in conflict with Islamabad over border disputes. As Pakistan–Taliban ties worsen, **India might be tempted to treat the Taliban as a counterweight to Pakistan**, especially after Taliban FM Amir Khan Muttaqi's visit to New Delhi.

### India's Objectives in Afghanistan

India's Afghanistan policy rests on three aims:

1. **Safeguard \$3 billion in investments** made since 2001.
2. **Prevent Afghan soil** from being used by anti-India groups.
3. **Limit Pakistan's influence** and test Taliban autonomy.

Hence, India has pursued a policy of **conditional, gradual engagement**.

### Recent Engagements

- Amir Khan Muttaqi's India visit and the **upgrading of India's Kabul mission to a full embassy** mark expanded engagement.
- Taliban assured India that **Afghan territory won't be used for terrorism**.

### Recognition Debate

**For recognition:** Taliban appear consolidated; no anti-Taliban front exists; China and Russia have normalised ties.

**Against recognition:** Taliban remain repressive, ideologically rigid, and economically fragile. Recognition would **legitimise authoritarianism and reduce India's leverage**.

### Fragile Reality

Afghanistan's economy has **shrunk by**

**one-third**, and **23 million people need aid**. Women are **barred from education and work**, and governance remains **Pashtun, male-dominated**, risking instability in a diverse nation.

### Terror Networks

Despite denials, **UN reports confirm Taliban ties with al-Qaeda, LeT, JeM, and others**. The Haqqani network remains influential, and only **Islamic State–Khorasan** opposes Taliban rule. These links pose regional security risks.

### Strategic Recommendation

Recognition would **legitimise the Taliban** and encourage others to follow suit. India should instead **engage without endorsement**, using aid and diplomacy to press for inclusivity and women's rights while safeguarding its interests.

## GSAT-7R Launch (2025)

### Context

On November 2, 2025, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched **GSAT-7R (CMS-03)**, India's **heaviest indigenous communication satellite**, dedicated primarily to the **Indian Navy**, from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota**.

### Key Facts

- **Launch Vehicle:** LVM3-M5 (India's most powerful operational rocket)
- **Satellite Weight:** ~4,400 kg — *India's heaviest communication satellite so far*
- **Orbit:** Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO)
- **Mission Type:** Naval communication and maritime domain awareness

### Significance

#### Strengthens Naval Communication:

- Provides **secure voice, data, and video connectivity** across the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- Links **ships, submarines, aircraft, and Maritime Operations Centres**.
- Enhances **real-time situational awareness** in maritime operations.

#### Technological Self-Reliance (Aatmanirbhar Bharat):

- Fully **indigenously designed and developed**.
- Reduces dependence on **foreign launchers** for heavy satellites.
- Reinforces India's **space-based defence infrastructure**.

#### Strategic Implications:

- Strengthens India's **maritime security architecture**, crucial amid Indo-Pacific tensions.
- Expands India's **network-centric warfare capabilities**.

#### ISRO's Capability Leap:



Demonstrates LVM3's ability to **routinely handle >4-tonne satellites to GTO.**

- Supports upcoming **Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme** using evolved LVM3 variants.

#### GSAT-7 Series Context

Satellite	Year	Branch	Purpose
GSAT-7 (Rukmini)	2013	Navy	Maritime communication
GSAT-7A	2018	Air Force	Airborne communication
GSAT-7R (CMS-03)	2025	Navy	Advanced, secure maritime communication

## India's IT Dream is at a Crossroads

### Context

India's IT sector — long considered the **symbol of the country's economic liberalisation and global integration** — is facing a period of disruption, not decline. Massive layoffs, AI-led restructuring, and shrinking foreign demand have exposed deep **structural shifts** in the industry's employment and business model.

### Key Facts & Trends

- **Economic Contribution:**
  - Employs nearly **6 million people**.
  - Contributes **~7% to India's GDP**.
  - Valued at over **\$280 billion**.
- **Recent Layoffs:**

- **TCS:** 20,000 job cuts (3.2% of workforce — steepest ever).
- Other IT majors (Infosys, Wipro, HCL) are quietly trimming staff.
- Industry-wide layoffs may **exceed 50,000 jobs** by end of FY2025.
- Layoffs often happen via **"silent exits"** — performance-linked or voluntary — rather than formal termination.

### Why the Crisis? (Structural Shifts)

#### AI-driven Automation:

- Algorithms and *agentic AI* systems now handle routine tasks — coding, data entry, reporting — reducing need for human manpower.
- Global models from OpenAI, Anthropic, etc., are reshaping workflows and productivity.

#### Restrictive U.S. Immigration & Visa Costs:

- H-1B fee hikes and localisation requirements make sending low-cost Indian engineers abroad uneconomical.

#### Shrinking Client Budgets:

- Economic slowdown in **U.S. and Europe** → conservative IT spending → shift to **specialised expertise** rather than large outsourcing teams.

#### Obsolescence of Old Skills:

- Legacy systems like **SAP ECC**, mainframes, and .NET are outdated.
- Mid-level managers lack hands-on expertise in **AI, cloud, and cybersecurity**.

### The End of the "Digital Assembly Line" Model

- Earlier: hire in bulk → train in basic coding → deploy to clients → profit through scale.

- Now: clients want **AI-powered, cloud-native, secure solutions**, not thousands of programmers.
- Result: **Skill mismatch, mid-career vulnerability**, and **youth underemployment**.

## Tharoor's Prescriptions for the Future

### Skilling and Reskilling Revolution

- Large-scale **AI upskilling** across workforce (e.g., TCS has trained 5.5 lakh employees in basic AI skills).
- **Engineering curricula overhaul** — integrate:
  - Machine Learning & Data Science
  - AI Ethics and Product Thinking
  - Communication & Critical Thinking

### Policy Reforms

- Government must:
  - Incentivise **AI literacy** beyond digital literacy.
  - Require **layoff compensation (6–9 months' salary)** for mass retrenchments.
  - Build **career transition and mental health support** mechanisms.
  - Create **public–private partnerships** for AI education and R&D.

### Support for Startups and Innovation

- Move from **service-based outsourcing** → **product innovation** and **deep-tech entrepreneurship**.
- Strengthen India's **startup and venture capital ecosystem** in **AI, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure**.

### Global Engagement

- Negotiate **visa access, data governance**, and **trade stability** with global partners to protect IT competitiveness.

### Core Argument

India's IT sector is **not in decline** — it is in **transition**.

The focus must shift:

From **manpower** to **mindpower**,  
From **outsourcing** to **innovation**,  
From **quantity** to **quality**.

## In Brazil, COP30 and the Moment of Truth

**Context:** The COP of Truth

- The **Belém Summit in the Amazon** sets the stage for **COP30**, hosted by Brazil.
- Lula calls it the "*COP of Truth*" — a turning point where global leaders must shift from **rhetoric to real action** against climate change.
- The message: *failure to act decisively will erode faith* not only in climate summits but also in **multilateralism itself**.

### Historical Continuity: From Rio 1992 to Belém 2025

- Brazil's leadership in environmental diplomacy dates back to the **Earth Summit (Rio 1992)**, where landmark conventions on **Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Desertification** were adopted.
- Now, **33 years later**, the world returns to Brazil — to the **heart of the Amazon** — to reaffirm and update those commitments.
- Lula stresses that COPs should no longer be "**showcases of good ideas**" but **moments of tangible, verifiable progress**.

## Key Principle: Climate Justice and Shared Responsibilities

- Lula reasserts the **principle of “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)”** as **non-negotiable**.
- The **Global South**, he argues, seeks not charity but **climate justice** — fair access to finance and technology.
- Developed nations, having benefited from **carbon-intensive industrialization**, must **honour their debts** by funding mitigation and adaptation in the developing world.

## Brazil’s Commitments and Leadership

### A. Forest Conservation

- Brazil has **halved deforestation in the Amazon in two years**, proving that **decisive climate action is achievable**.
- Launch of **Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF)** — an **investment fund**, not a donation scheme, rewarding countries that preserve forests.
  - Brazil has pledged **\$1 billion** to the TFFF.
  - It represents a **“win-win”** model that incentivizes conservation while generating returns.

### B. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

- Brazil is the **second country** to present an updated NDC.
- The target: **reduce emissions by 59%–67%**, covering **all greenhouse gases and all sectors**.
- Calls for **other nations to match this ambition** and move toward implementation, not mere promises.

## Energy Transition and Economic

## Reorientation

- Brazil’s **energy mix** is already among the **cleanest globally**, with:
  - **88%** of electricity from renewables,
  - leadership in **biofuels**,
  - rapid expansion in **wind, solar, and green hydrogen**.
- Lula envisions **redirecting oil revenues** to finance a **just and equitable energy transition**.
- Predicts that global oil firms, including **Petrobras**, will evolve into **broad energy companies**, as the **fossil-fuel model becomes unsustainable**.

## Linking Climate Action with Social Justice

- Emphasis on a **“people-centred approach”** to climate and energy policies.
- The **most vulnerable** — poor, rural, and marginalized groups — face the harshest effects of climate change.
- Announces the **“Declaration on Hunger, Poverty and Climate”** at Belém, aligning **climate action with human development**.
- Reminder:
  - **2 billion people** lack clean cooking fuels,
  - **673 million** live with hunger — hence, **climate justice and food security** must go hand in hand.

## Reforming Global Governance

- Lula criticizes the **UN Security Council’s paralysis** in preventing wars and ensuring peace.
- Proposes the creation of a **UN Climate Change Council**, linked to the **UN General Assembly**, as a **credible and accountable** mechanism to:
  - Monitor compliance,

- Enforce commitments,
- Revive faith in **effective multilateral climate governance**.

### Message to the World: From Promises to Action

- Lula concludes by declaring the “**end of the era of good intentions.**”
- COP30 must deliver **action plans, not declarations**.
- The **Belém COP** is envisioned as a **turning point** where nations prove their **seriousness and unity** in safeguarding the planet’s future.

- The **passenger train rammed into the rear brake van** of a stationary **freight train**.
- The **loco pilot, Vidya Sagar**, died on the spot, while the **assistant loco pilot** remains critically injured and unfit to give a statement.
- **Visibility issues** due to the **curve alignment and intense sunlight** may have contributed to signal misjudgment.
- **AILRSA (All India Loco Running Staff Association)** pointed out that the **signal positioning and multiple track layouts** in the section often create confusion under poor visibility conditions.

## Bilaspur Train Crash: Red Signal Breach Exposes Systemic Gaps in Railway Safety

### Context

On **November 4, 2025**, a tragic **train collision** near **Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh**, claimed **11 lives** and left several injured. The incident involved a **Mainline Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) passenger train** colliding with a **goods train** on the same track. Preliminary investigations have classified the incident as a **Signal Passed at Danger (SPAD)** case — one of the most serious infractions in railway operations.

### Key Findings of the Probe

- The **fact-finding committee**, comprising senior railway officials from multiple departments, concluded that the **loco crew crossed a red signal** without authorization.

### Technical and Operational Context

- The train (No. **68733 Gavera Road–Bilaspur MEMU**) had **two crew members** — an exception since MEMU services usually have only one pilot.
- The second pilot was onboard as the main pilot **had not cleared the aptitude test**, raising questions on **crew competency management and training protocols**.

### Legal and Regulatory Framework Invoked

- **Section 161, 304A – Indian Penal Code (IPC)**: Negligence causing death or endangering safety of others.
- **Sections 137 & 151 – Indian Railways Act, 1989**: Deals with acts endangering safety and rash or negligent operations.
- The case also falls under the **Railway Safety Rules** and the **Railway Accident Manual**, which require mandatory investigation by the **Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS)**.

## Broader Concerns

- **Human error** remains the leading cause of SPAD cases — accounting for nearly **75% of train accidents** in India.
- **Kavach (Train Collision Avoidance System)**, already operational on several routes, **was not yet deployed** in this section of the South East Central Railway.
- The **incident underscores the urgent need for complete Kavach coverage**, enhanced **crew training**, and **ergonomic redesign** of signals on curved tracks

## Way Forward

- **Accelerate Kavach implementation** on all busy routes to automate braking in SPAD cases.
- **Improve signal visibility** through LED panels, sun visors, and reorientation in curved zones.
- **Regular psychological and aptitude testing** of loco pilots with adequate rest periods.
- **Independent safety audits** and accountability mechanisms for zones with recurring SPAD incidents

## Aditya-L1 Gets a Close Look at Solar Eruptions: India's First Spectroscopic Study of a CME near the Sun

### Context

India's **Aditya-L1 mission**, launched on **September 2, 2023**, has achieved a major milestone. Using the **Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC)** payload, scientists from the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)** in collaboration with **NASA** have recorded the **first-ever spectroscopic observations of a Coronal Mass Ejection**

(CME) in the **visible wavelength range**, very close to the Sun's surface.

### About the Mission

- **Aditya-L1** is India's **first dedicated solar observatory**, positioned at the **Lagrange Point 1 (L1)**, about **1.5 million km from Earth**.
- From this vantage point, the spacecraft can observe the Sun **continuously for 24 hours**, as the Sun never sets at L1.
- It carries **seven payloads**, designed to study the **solar corona, solar wind, magnetic fields, and particle dynamics**.

### Key Payload Involved: Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC)

- Developed by **IIA, Bengaluru**, VELC is the **primary scientific instrument** aboard Aditya-L1.
- It can **image and perform spectroscopy** of the solar corona — the outermost part of the Sun's atmosphere — where CMEs originate.
- VELC's high resolution enables **continuous monitoring of solar activity** and **detection of early-stage CMEs**.

### Major Findings

#### Electron Density:

- CME observed had about **370 million electrons per cubic centimetre**.
- The normal corona near the Sun has only **10–100 million electrons/cm<sup>3</sup>**.

#### Energy:

- Estimated at  **$9.4 \times 10^{21}$  joules** — roughly equivalent to the **energy**

released by billions of atomic bombs.

#### Mass:

- Approximately **270 million tons**, compared to the **1.5 million-ton iceberg** that sank the Titanic.

#### Speed:

- Initial CME speed recorded at **264 km/sec**.

#### Temperature:

- Measured at **1.8 million Kelvin**.

### Scientific Significance

- **First-time measurement** of CME parameters *this close to the Sun* in visible light.
- Helps in understanding **how much mass and energy the Sun loses** during CMEs.
- Provides crucial data for **space weather forecasting**, which impacts **satellite communication, navigation systems, and astronaut safety**.
- Aids in developing predictive models for **geomagnetic storms** caused by solar eruptions.

### Broader Context

- The **Sun is entering the maximum phase** of its **Solar Cycle 25**, leading to increased CME frequency and solar flares.
- With VELC now fully operational, **Aditya-L1 is expected to capture more energetic solar eruptions**, enriching our understanding of **solar-terrestrial interactions**

## AI-171 Crash and the Crisis of Transparency in Indian Aviation Safety

### Context

On **June 12, 2025**, **Air India Flight AI-171**, a **Boeing 787 Dreamliner**, crashed shortly after take-off from **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**, killing **241 passengers, 19 people on the ground**, and leaving only **one survivor**. It marked the **first-ever crash of a Boeing 787 since its global induction in 2011**, shaking public confidence in India's civil aviation safety mechanisms.

### The Accident and Immediate Investigation

- The **Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)** recovered both **Flight Data Recorders (FDR and CVR)** by June 16, 2025.
- **Preliminary report** was released on **July 12, 2025**, but was **inconclusive** — offering limited data and generating **more speculation** than clarity.
- **Data downloaded by June 25** confirmed a **dual engine shutdown** within seconds after liftoff — an extremely rare event in modern aviation.

### Key Technical Aspects (from Preliminary Findings)

- The **co-pilot** was the **pilot flying**, while the **captain** acted as **pilot monitoring**.
- During take-off, **fuel control switches** for both engines transitioned to **cut-off** positions **within two seconds**, starving the engines of fuel.
- This movement could only occur **manually**, not due to any electrical or software failure.
- **CVR data** indicated possible cockpit confusion — with an ambiguous line: *“Why did you do that... I did not do that.”*

- Standard cockpit protocol mandates that, during an emergency, the **captain takes over controls**, with clear call-outs: *“My Controls” / “Your Controls.”* Whether these were made remains unverified in the report.

### Transparency Concerns

- The **Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)** promised a *“transparent investigation”*, yet the **final report remains unreleased** months after the incident.
- The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** issued an unusual order giving **‘X-category commando protection’** to the AAIB chief — citing unspecified *“threat perception.”* Such protection for an accident investigator is **unprecedented worldwide**, raising further questions about **political and intelligence sensitivity** surrounding the case.
- In contrast, the **U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)** and the **U.K. Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB-UK)** issue **daily briefings** after major accidents — ensuring public trust and data credibility.

### Institutional and Legal Framework

- AAIB** was created under the **Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2012**, deriving authority from the **Aircraft Act, 1934** and **ICAO Annex 13** (Chicago Convention).
- These regulations require:
  - A **preliminary report within 30 days**, and
  - A **final report within 12 months**, unless justified delays are publicly notified.
- India’s repeated failure to meet these ICAO-mandated transparency norms

risks **lowering global confidence** in its aviation safety governance.

### Issues Highlighted

- ! Opaque investigation process** undermining public trust.
- ! Possible procedural violations** in cockpit management and handover during emergencies.
- ! Delay in data release** enabling misinformation and *“YouTube conspiracy narratives.”*
- ! Safety culture deficit** — where institutional secrecy trumps accountability.

### Global Comparison

Country	Agency	Transparency Practice
U.S.	NTSB	Daily press briefings, full data transcripts released post-verification
U.K.	AAIB	Public preliminary report in 7–14 days
India	AAIB	Limited disclosure, delayed reports, minimal press interaction

### Implications

- Erosion of **public and pilot confidence** in the aviation regulatory framework.
- Potential **stress among flight crews**, fearing recurrence due to unclear cause attribution.
- International image damage** — particularly for India’s growing aviation market and airline expansion.
- Risk of **ICAO audit downgrades** affecting international code-share agreements.

## Way Forward

- **Immediate release** of the **CVR and FDR analyses**, in line with global norms.
- Establish an **Independent Accident Review Board**, insulated from ministerial control.
- **Institutionalize transparency**: mandatory press briefings within 48 hours of major accidents.
- Integrate **Crew Resource Management (CRM)** and **Emergency Takeover Procedures** in all simulator checks.
- **Amend Aircraft Rules, 2012** to prescribe penalties for delay or non-publication of reports beyond ICAO deadlines.

## Conclusion

The AI-171 tragedy has evolved from a **technical failure** into a **crisis of credibility** for India's aviation governance.

Releasing the crash investigation report is not merely a procedural step — it is a **test of institutional transparency and public accountability**.

As India aims to become a global aviation hub under the **UDAN 2.0 and National Civil Aviation Policy**, restoring faith in **safety oversight** is non-negotiable

## Capital Owners Gain, Workers Lose: The Widening Global Wealth Gap

### Why in News

The **Global Inequality Report 2024** highlights a growing **wealth and income divide** between capital owners and workers worldwide. Between **1990 and 2024**, the **capital share of national income** rose in **56% of countries**, covering **74% of the global population**.

## Key Findings

- **High Inequality**:
  - **83% of countries** (representing **90% of the world's population**) have a **Gini coefficient above 0.4**.
  - Indicates persistent high-income inequality.
- **Shift Toward Capital**:
  - A growing share of income now goes to **profits, rents, and dividends** rather than **wages**.
- **Unequal Capital Ownership**:
  - **85% of the world's population** earns **no income from capital**.
  - In **India**, **97% of people** live in households with **less than \$100 per year** in capital income.
- **CEO–Worker Pay Divide**:
  - From **2019–2024**, **CEO pay rose 50%**, while **worker pay rose less than 1%**.
- **Private vs. Public Wealth**:
  - **Private wealth** accumulation has **outpaced public wealth**, leaving many governments in **net debt**.

## Implications

- Rising inequality erodes **social mobility**, fuels **political polarization**, and widens **gender and racial disparities** (e.g., maternal mortality gaps in the U.S.).
- Declining labour share undermines **inclusive growth** and **SDG Goal 10 (Reduced Inequality)**.

## Way Forward

- **Progressive taxation** on wealth and inheritance.
- **Strengthening labour rights** and wage-linked productivity.
- **Public investment** in health, education, and social safety nets.

- Global cooperation to **tackle tax evasion** and **cross-border wealth concentration**.

## Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT): Finding the Right Balance

**Author: C. Rangarajan**

**Context:** India's current FIT mandate (4% ± 2%) ends in **March 2026** and is under review. RBI has released a discussion paper. The article addresses three questions:

1. Headline vs core inflation
2. Acceptable level of inflation
3. Appropriate inflation band

### Why Inflation Control Matters

- High inflation acts as a *regressive consumption tax*, hurting the poor disproportionately.
- It damages savings and misallocates investment.
- Chakravarty Committee (1985) observed an “acceptable” price rise of **4%**, though with unclear reasoning.
- Since automatic monetisation ended in 1994, and FIT began in 2016, inflation has been **more stable** despite multiple shocks.

### What Should RBI Target — Headline or Core Inflation?

#### Argument for Headline Inflation

- Objective of monetary policy: protect the poor, stabilise savings & investment → **headline inflation** captures the actual cost-of-living change.
- Food inflation is **not always pure supply shock**.
  - In an expansionary monetary environment, food inflation becomes more severe.
- Milton Friedman's insight:

- Prices rise *only when money supply increases*.
- Individual price increases ≠ general inflation unless liquidity expands.

### Key Insight

- If aggregate demand is stable → food inflation only changes *relative prices*.
- But in India, food inflation often causes **second-round effects** — higher wages, broader cost pressures → pushes **core inflation up**, affecting general price levels.  
→ Hence RBI **must consider food inflation** in policy decisions.

### What Is the Acceptable Inflation Level for India?

- Phillips Curve “inflation–growth trade-off” has not held empirically in the long run.
- High inflation hurts growth after a point → leads to the concept of **threshold inflation**.
- Using data since 1991 (excluding COVID):
  - A quadratic fit shows the *turning point* at **3.98%**.
  - Indicates that **optimal inflation for India ≈ 4%**.

### Forward-looking simulation

- Preliminary models for 2026–2031 show:
  - Acceptable inflation **below 4%**, depending on fiscal and external pressures.
- Therefore, **there is no strong case for increasing the target above 4%**.

### What Should Be the Inflation Band?

- Current band **4% ± 2% (i.e., 2–6%)** has given adequate flexibility.

- But RBI needs clearer guidance on:
  - **How long it can operate near the upper bound (6%).**
- Data shows:
  - Beyond **6%**, growth declines sharply.
  - Hence repeatedly hitting 6% violates the *spirit* of FIT.
- Greenfield tourism project and township
- The project has faced sustained scrutiny before the NGT and Calcutta High Court.

## FIT and Fiscal Policy Must Work Together

- Historical lesson:
  - 1970s–1980s inflation driven by **monetised fiscal deficits**.
- Key reforms:
  - End of ad hoc Treasury Bills (1994) → reduced automatic monetisation
  - **FRBM Act (2003)** → fiscal discipline
  - **FIT (2016)** → monetary stability

### Core Insight

If either **FRBM** or **FIT** weakens, the other becomes ineffective → risking macroeconomic stability

## Key Environmental Admissions by the Environment Ministry

During the hearing, **ASG Aishwarya Bhati** acknowledged that **Galathea Bay**, where the port is planned, contains:

- **20,000+ live coral colonies**
- **50+ nesting mounds** of the endemic **Nicobar Megapode** (Schedule I species)
- An active nesting site for the **Giant Leatherback turtle** (world's largest turtle)

The Ministry still defended the project, stating that long-term mitigation measures (till **2052**) were built into the clearance.

## The Ministry's Contradiction: Allowing & Mitigating

The article argues that:

- The Ministry is “mitigating” problems it **created** by clearing the project.
- It allowed the project first, and only then prescribed conservation.

## Great Nicobar Project and the Ministry in Knots

### Context

- On **October 30, 2025**, the Union Environment Ministry admitted before the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** that the **₹92,000-crore Great Nicobar mega-project** will significantly impact the island's rich biodiversity.
- The project includes:
  - Transshipment port
  - Airport
  - Power plant

## Why the Ministry's Stance is Problematic

### A. Denotification of Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (2021)

- The **NBWL**, which once proposed protection (1997), **denotified** it to make way for the project.
- Species protected earlier — **leatherback turtles, megapodes, corals, mangroves** — lost legal protection.

- Then the same ministry claims “mitigation measures” will handle impacts.

- Confirms Galathea Bay’s strong ecological vitality.
- If ASG Bhati’s statements are correct, then **Galathea Bay is unquestionably CRZ-1A.**

## B. The CRZ-1A Controversy

According to CRZ norms:

- Areas with **corals, mangroves, turtle nesting beaches, seagrass beds**, or in **protected areas**, fall under **CRZ-1A** → **Maximum protection.**
- **CRZ-1A prohibits ports.**

→ **Either the Ministry’s submissions to NGT OR the NCSCM/HPC reports are incorrect.**

This raises questions of:

- **Scientific rigour**
- **Transparency**
- **Procedural honesty**

### NGT Order (April 2023)

- Explicitly said **20,668 corals** exist at the port site.
- Therefore, the **port falls in CRZ-1A** and is **not permissible.**

### Key Ethical and Governance Issues

1. **Conflict of Interest:** MoEFCC acts as both *regulator* and *facilitator* of large projects.
2. **Opacity:** Withholding environmental reports under the pretext of “defence use.”
3. **Dilution of ecological safeguards:** From Wildlife Sanctuary → CRZ-1B.
4. **Regulatory capture:** Development agencies influencing regulatory bodies.
5. **Weak Environmental Appraisal:** Approvals based on data not in public domain

NGT set up a **High-Powered Committee (HPC)** which asked **NCSCM** to verify.

### NCSCM’s Claim

- Reported that **no part of the project area** is CRZ-1A.
- Calling it **CRZ-1B**, where port construction is allowed.

### Issues

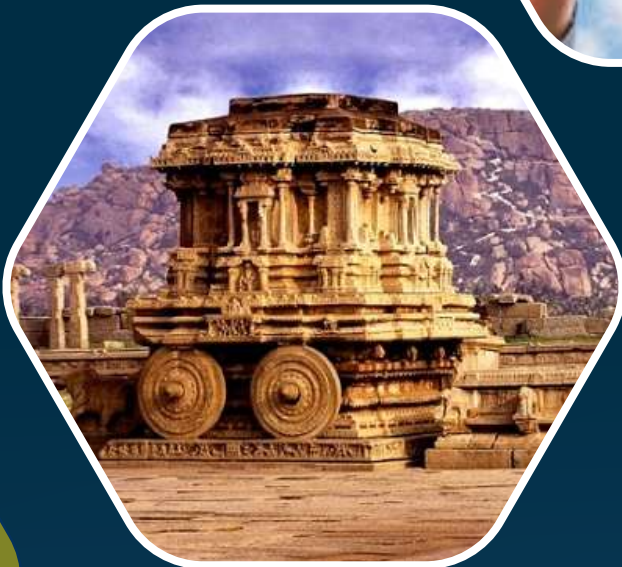
- **Circular logic:** NCSCM decided the area is not CRZ-1A because ports can be built only in CRZ-1B. Hence it declared it CRZ-1B.
- **Confidential reports:** NCSCM and HPC reports not made public, citing defence reasons, although the denotification was for commercial activity.

## Galathea Bay’s Continuing Ecological Importance

New data contradicts NCSCM:

- **600+ leatherback turtle nestings** in 2024 — among the highest recorded.

# PRELIMS POINTERS



## PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- The recent Himachal Pradesh landslide tragedy was triggered primarily due to:
  - Earthquakes
  - Cloudburst
  - Continuous intermittent rainfall
  - Glacier retreat
- Cyclone *Montha* made landfall near which coastal region?
  - Puducherry
  - Kochi
  - Kakinada
  - Paradip
- Which agency provides storm surge and high-wave warnings during cyclones?
  - IMD
  - INCOIS
  - NDRF
  - NIOT
- The controversy between Tagore and Bankim in West Bengal reflects issues mainly related to:
  - Electoral reforms
  - Border disputes
  - Cultural appropriation and identity politics
  - Linguistic federalism
- The attack on CJI Gavai highlighted the importance of:
  - Article 124
  - Judicial review
  - Judicial independence as part of Basic Structure
  - Collegium reforms
- Which of the following is a structural cause of judicial delays in India?
  - Long vacations
  - Poorly drafted laws
  - Too many tribunals
  - High judge salaries
- Passive euthanasia in India is legally recognised through:
  - Parliamentary law
  - Supreme Court judgments
  - State laws
  - Medical Council regulations
- Which of the following is part of the proposed reform for passive euthanasia?
  - Centralised Ombudsman for approvals
  - Mandatory Lok Adalats
  - Hospital ethics committees
  - Panchayat-level authorisation
- The US decision to impose a \$100,000 H-1B visa fee disproportionately affects India because:
  - India banned STEM migration
  - ~70% H-1B holders are Indians
  - Indian degrees are invalid in the US
  - Indian IT firms do not hire locally
- India–UK FTA provides how many tariff lines as duty-free?
  - 90%
  - 95%
  - 99.1%
  - 100%
- China–ASEAN FTA 3.0 does NOT include which sector?
  - Green economy
  - Digital economy
  - Nuclear weapons trade
  - Agriculture
- The India–Mongolia defence partnership recently announced establishment of:
  - A joint naval base
  - An Indian Defence Attaché in Ulaanbaatar

- C. A drone-export facility
- D. A tri-service command

13. WHO recently issued an alert for contaminated medicines due to which toxic compound?

- A. Methanol
- B. Diethylene glycol (DEG)
- C. Cyanide
- D. Benzene

14. The execution of Nimisha Priya in Yemen is currently halted due to:

- A. UN Resolution
- B. Ongoing diplomatic and mediation efforts
- C. Yemeni Supreme Court
- D. Amnesty from Yemen's President

15. "Digital arrests" recently flagged by the Supreme Court involve:

- A. Physical kidnapping
- B. Cyber ransom on blockchain
- C. Impersonation of police/judges using deepfakes
- D. Hijacking Aadhaar-linked accounts

16. Preventive detention appears under which constitutional provision?

- A. Article 21
- B. Articles 22(3)–22(7)
- C. Articles 32–35
- D. Article 19(2)

17. The Kerala Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act (KAAPA) is related to:

- A. Sedition
- B. Preventive detention
- C. Narcotics
- D. Organised crime

18. Who among the following drafted the *rough* constitutional draft in 1947?

- A. B.R. Ambedkar
- B. B.N. Rau
- C. Rajendra Prasad
- D. Alladi Krishna Swami Iyer

19. Under the Constitution, Gram Sabhas are empowered by:

- A. Article 243G
- B. Article 243H
- C. Article 243A
- D. Article 246

20. Which initiative simulates Gram Sabha functioning for youth civic education?

- A. Model UN (MUN)
- B. Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS)
- C. Bharat Yuva Sabha
- D. Civic Learning Programme (CLP)

21. Which Article deals with separation of judiciary from the executive?

- A. Article 49
- B. Article 50
- C. Article 52
- D. Article 61

22. ED derives powers from which Act?

- A. NDPS Act
- B. FEMA
- C. PMLA, 2002
- D. FCRA

23. PMLA requires ED to share information with state agencies under which section?

- A. Section 50(2)
- B. Section 45
- C. Section 66(2)
- D. Section 13

24. Which is part of Ambedkar's constitutional philosophy?

- A. Economic federalism only
- B. Social democracy as the foundation of political democracy
- C. Market-driven constitutionalism
- D. Centralisation of all powers

25. Judiciary as part of Basic Structure was reaffirmed in:

- A. A.K. Gopalan
- B. ADM Jabalpur

- C. Kesavananda Bharati
- D. S.P. Gupta

26. Which constitutional principle is violated if ED encroaches on state policing powers?

- A. Parliamentary privileges
- B. Judicial supremacy
- C. Federalism
- D. Governor's discretion

27. Advance directives are associated with:

- A. RTI Act
- B. Lokpal Act
- C. Passive euthanasia
- D. Anti-corruption pledges

28. National Suicide Prevention Strategy was launched in:

- A. 2015
- B. 2018
- C. 2021
- D. 2022

29. Which ministry runs the Civil Registration System (CRS)?

- A. Ministry of Health
- B. Registrar General of India (Home Ministry)
- C. Ministry of Women & Child Development
- D. Ministry of Rural Development

30. Which state reports the *lowest* Sex Ratio at Birth in CRS 2023?

- A. Haryana
- B. Bihar
- C. Gujarat
- D. Maharashtra

31. Industrial output is measured using:

- A. WPI
- B. CPI
- C. Index of Industrial Production (IIP)
- D. PMI

32. Base year of IIP is:

- A. 2004–05
- B. 2011–12
- C. 2016–17
- D. 2018–19

33. Which sector has the highest weight in IIP?

- A. Electricity
- B. Manufacturing
- C. Mining
- D. Transport

34. Which of the following are core industries?

1. Cement
2. Steel
3. Automobiles

A. 1 only

B. 1 and 2 only

C. 1, 2 and not 3

D. All three

35. The Eight Core Industries account for what percentage of IIP weight?

A. 20%

B. 30%

C. 40.27%

D. 50%

36. The dip in IIP growth in Sept 2025 was attributed mainly to:

A. Export collapse

B. Delayed GST rate cut transmission

C. Oil crisis

D. Bank failures

37. Which of the following is a potential effect of US visa fee hikes?

A. Boosts US STEM supply

B. Reduces cost for firms

C. Shrinks access to global skilled talent

D. Encourages outsourcing to US

38. Rolls-Royce's recent investment in India relates to:

A. Telecom

- B. Tourism
- C. Manufacturing and R&D expansion
- D. Fisheries

39. Which of the following features in the India–UK FTA?

- A. Relaxed student visa rules
- B. Defence treaty
- C. Tariff cuts on whisky, automobiles, textiles
- D. Free movement across borders

40. India's mental health budget remains largely underutilised due to:

- A. Constitutional limits
- B. Weak institutional capacity
- C. No need for spending
- D. Absence of legislation

41. Landslides are common in Himalayas mainly due to:

- A. Old volcanic rocks
- B. Young fold mountains with fragile slopes
- C. Lack of vegetation
- D. Excessive snowmelt

42. Storm surge is defined as:

- A. Increase in ocean salinity
- B. Rise in seawater above astronomical tide
- C. Cyclone eye formation
- D. Ocean current reversal

43. Great Nicobar Island's project threatens which PVTG?

- A. Jarawas
- B. Shompen
- C. Onge
- D. Sentinelese

44. Denotification of tribal reserves requires settlement under:

- A. FRA 2010
- B. PESA
- C. Forest Rights Act 2006
- D. Wildlife Protection Act

45. Which of the following is a key

ecological concern in Great Nicobar?

- A. Coral bleaching
- B. Loss of primary rainforest & PVTG habitat
- C. Sand dune mining
- D. Marine invasive species

46. Taliban's recent remarks on Pakistan relate to tensions along:

- A. Khyber Pass
- B. Line of Control
- C. Durand Line
- D. Wakhan Corridor

47. Gaza Peace Summit 2025 is co-hosted by:

- A. Israel & UN
- B. Qatar & US
- C. Egypt & US
- D. Jordan & EU

48. Formal ceasefire negotiations involve exchange of:

- A. Nuclear material
- B. Hostages and prisoners
- C. Oil pipelines
- D. Territorial concessions

49. Venezuela mobilised troops due to:

- A. Brazil–EU dispute
- B. Chinese military presence
- C. US naval build-up & covert operations
- D. Border dispute with Guyana

50. The US Chamber of Commerce challenged the visa fee citing violation of:

- A. NAFTA
- B. WTO rules
- C. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)
- D. At-will employment laws

## MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. “Cultural nationalism is increasingly influencing political narratives in India.” Discuss with examples the implications for federalism and social cohesion. (15 marks)
2. Examine the role of caste movements such as the Mahad Satyagraha in shaping India’s constitutional morality. (10 marks)
3. Himalayan states are becoming more prone to cascading disasters. Analyse the reasons and suggest a comprehensive mitigation strategy. (15 marks)
4. “Urban expansion in coastal regions amplifies climate vulnerability.” Discuss in the context of CRZ norms and recent cyclonic events. (10 marks)
5. Evaluate how demographic trends indicated by CRS 2023 (birth & death registration) impact welfare planning and social justice initiatives. (15 marks)
6. “Judicial independence remains the cornerstone of India’s Basic Structure, yet faces new-age pressures.” Examine with recent examples. (15 marks)
7. Discuss the constitutional and ethical concerns surrounding preventive detention laws in India, with reference to KAAPA and NSA. (10 marks)
8. “Digital governance must be matched with digital safeguards.” Analyse in the context of rising digital arrest scams and deepfake-based crimes. (10 marks)
9. India’s diplomatic engagements in West Asia face challenges due to shifting security architectures. Analyse with reference to Gaza crisis and Yemen issues. (15 marks)
10. Evaluate the prospects and challenges of India–UK relations in the context of the ongoing FTA and defence cooperation. (15 marks)
11. Industrial growth figures often fail to reflect on-ground economic realities. Analyse using recent trends in IIP, core industries, and fiscal policies. (15 marks)
12. Examine the implications of the US H-1B visa fee hike on India’s technology sector and global talent mobility. (10 marks)
13. Discuss the environmental and tribal livelihood concerns associated with the Great Nicobar Island Development Project. (15 marks)
14. How can India strengthen its disaster management framework to minimise casualties during cyclones, landslides, and floods? (10 marks)
15. Evaluate the effectiveness of India’s mental health policy framework, with reference to the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (10 marks)
16. “Public office demands moral courage as much as legal responsibility.” Discuss with reference to recent ethical challenges faced by judges and civil servants. (10 marks)
17. Explain the ethical dilemmas in implementing passive euthanasia in India, especially regarding advance directives and medical autonomy. (15 marks)
18. Describe how empathy and emotional intelligence can enhance the functioning of Gram Sabhas and local governance institutions. (10 marks)
19. “Whistleblowing is both a moral duty and a professional risk.” Discuss with suitable real-life illustrations. (10 marks)
20. Critically comment on the ethical issues in the use of AI-powered surveillance and biometric data by the State. (15 marks)

<b>1.C</b>	<b>2.C</b>	<b>3.B</b>	<b>4.C</b>	<b>5.C</b>	<b>6.B</b>	<b>7.B</b>	<b>8.C</b>	<b>9.B</b>	<b>10.C</b>
<b>11.C</b>	<b>12.B</b>	<b>13.B</b>	<b>14.B</b>	<b>15.C</b>	<b>16.B</b>	<b>17.B</b>	<b>18.B</b>	<b>19.C</b>	<b>20.B</b>
<b>21.B</b>	<b>22.C</b>	<b>23.C</b>	<b>24.B</b>	<b>25.C</b>	<b>26.C</b>	<b>27.C</b>	<b>28.D</b>	<b>29.B</b>	<b>30.B</b>
<b>31.C</b>	<b>32.B</b>	<b>33.B</b>	<b>34.C</b>	<b>35.C</b>	<b>36.B</b>	<b>37.C</b>	<b>38.C</b>	<b>39.C</b>	<b>40.B</b>
<b>41.B</b>	<b>42.B</b>	<b>43.B</b>	<b>44.C</b>	<b>45.B</b>	<b>46.C</b>	<b>47.C</b>	<b>48.B</b>	<b>49.C</b>	<b>50.C</b>

