

P L RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

UPSC



YEARLY COMPILATION

2025 – 2026

MAINS CONTENT (QUESTIONS WITH ANSWER)

OCTOBER (PART –3)

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Editorial of the Day – 01.10.2025

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1. A Century of Upholding Merit – The UPSC's Journey (The Hindu)
2. Analysis of Triumph Approach to Peacemaking (The Indian Express)

1. A Century of Upholding Merit – The UPSC's Journey

GS Paper 2 – Governance, Constitution, Polity. **Topic** – Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Sub-topics – Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies; Role of civil services in a democracy.

1. Introduction – The Guardian of Meritocracy

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is celebrating its centenary, marking 100 years as the bedrock of merit-based recruitment for India's central civil services. It is a key constitutional body that ensures an efficient, independent, and impartial civil service, which is vital for good governance and national integrity. Its journey is a testament to India's commitment to fairness and trust in public institutions.

2. Historical Evolution of the Commission

The UPSC's origins predate India's independence, evolving through key legislative milestones –
1926 – The Public Service Commission was first established on October 1, 1926, following the recommendations of the Lee Commission and provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919. Sir Ross Barker was its first Chairman.

1935 – With the enactment of the Government of India Act, 1935, it was reconstituted as the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC).

1950 – After the adoption of the Constitution of India, the FPSC was renamed the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), and its role and autonomy were enshrined under Article 320 of the Constitution.

3. Foundational Principles and Core Functions

The UPSC operates on a set of unwavering principles that have sustained public faith in the institution for a century.

Core Philosophy – Its guiding philosophy is to provide a "true level playing field" for all aspirants, irrespective of their background. This is inspired by the Bhagavad Gita's teaching – "Niyatam kuru karma tvam, karma jyaayo hyakarmanah, ... Asakto hyaacharan karma paramapnoti purushah" (Perform your duty with rigor and fairness, without attachment to outcomes).

Integrity and Impartiality – The Commission ensures impartiality in evaluation and protects against malpractice, political influence, and external pressures, maintaining confidentiality and fairness.

Primary Function – Its mandate is to select the most suitable and meritorious talent for the nation's civil services, including engineering, forest, medical, and various other cadres, through a rigorous and competitive examination process.

Scale of Operations – The scale is immense, with lakhs of applicants taking the preliminary examination, choosing from numerous optional subjects and 22 languages, showcasing the complexity and logistical challenge of its task.

4. UPSC as a Symbol of the 'Indian Dream'

The Commission is more than just a recruiting agency; it represents a pathway for social mobility and national service.

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Aspiration Hub – For decades, the civil services examination has embodied the aspirations of India's youth, attracting the most determined and talented individuals.

Inclusive Opportunity – It provides a genuine opportunity for aspirants from the most underprivileged and remote corners of the country to rise to the highest echelons of government, making it a powerful tool for social equity.

5. Challenges and Future-Ready Reforms

As it enters its second century, the UPSC faces the challenge of adapting to a rapidly changing world, marked by technological advancements and evolving governance models. To remain relevant, it has initiated several key reforms.

Adapting to New Demands – The primary challenge is to keep the recruitment process aligned with the changing needs of modern governance and the impact of the global technological revolution.

PRATIBHA Initiative – The UPSC is launching the Public Recruitment Application and Integration Bridge for Hiring Applicants (PRATIBHA). This includes –

1. A new application portal.
2. One-Time Registration for applicants.
3. Greater ease of application and enhanced user experience.

Embracing Technology – The Commission is actively working to integrate digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and integrity of its processes without compromising fairness and rigour.

6. Conclusion – The Way Forward

For 100 years, the UPSC has been the unwavering guardian of merit, ensuring that the nation's bureaucracy is staffed by individuals selected on the basis of competence and integrity. While its legacy is a source of immense pride, its future depends on its ability to continuously adapt and innovate. By embracing technological reforms like PRATIBHA and AI, the UPSC is preparing itself for the next century, committed to upholding its core values while evolving to meet the demands of a modern, dynamic India.

Source – https://epaper.thehindu.com/reader?utm_source=Hindu&utm_medium=Menu&utm_campaign=Header&gl=1*x0qkj*_gcl_au*MTI4NzE1MzE3OC4xNzUyOTAyOTMyLjE3Mjg2Mjg3MjkuMTc1OTc0NzY2OS4xNzU5NzQ3NzE3

2. Analysis of Trump's Approach to Peacemaking

GS Paper 2 – International Relations. **Topic** – Effect of policies and politics of developed countries on global affairs.

Sub-topics – Conflict Resolution, Role of Major Powers in International Politics, Middle East Conflict (Israel-Palestine), Ukraine Conflict.

1. Introduction – Ambition vs. Execution

The article argues that while President Donald Trump's peace initiatives in the Middle East and Europe are bold ventures driven by the might of US power and his personal ambition, they are fundamentally flawed. His approach lacks the patience, diplomatic diligence, and deep understanding of complex conflicts necessary for successful and sustainable peacemaking. Consequently, his grand plans are ambitious declarations resting on "shaky foundations."

2. The Nature of Trump's "Peace President" Personal

Personal Commitment – Trump has a strong personal commitment to being remembered as a "peace president," willing to expend significant political capital on ending global conflicts.

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Dominant but Impatient Style – His approach is characterized by bold, unilateral declarations and a belief that his personal intervention can quickly solve long-standing issues, as seen in his promise to end the Ukraine war "in a day."

Lack of Diplomatic Nuance – The core problem identified is that his commitment is not matched by the hard work of diplomacy. He tends to overlook the tragic roots of conflicts and the arduous process required for genuine reconciliation.

3. Case Study – The Middle East Peace Plan

Trump unveiled a sweeping 21-point plan aimed at ending the Gaza war and establishing a roadmap for peaceful Israeli-Palestinian coexistence.

Key Provisions of the Plan –

1. An immediate ceasefire and the exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners.
2. Phased withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.
3. Delivery of large-scale humanitarian relief.
4. Establishment of an interim, technocratic Palestinian committee to govern Gaza, supervised by an international "Board of Peace" chaired by Trump himself.
5. Disarmament of Hamas militias, with amnesty for those who comply.
6. A framework for economic reconstruction and a conditional pathway toward eventual Palestinian statehood.

Reactions from Key Stakeholders –

1. **Arab & Muslim States (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, etc.)** – Offered nuanced formal praise. They welcomed Trump's personal commitment but stopped short of endorsing every provision, reiterating their core demand for a sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem.
2. **Israel (Netanyahu)** – Did not reject the plan but made it clear that if Hamas refuses to comply, Israel will "finish the job" in Gaza. The plan also faces skepticism from Israel's far-right.
3. **Hamas and other Militant Groups** – Dismissed the plan as a one-sided deal heavily tilted toward Israel, viewing the terms as a call for "unconditional surrender."

4. Core Challenges and Implementation Pitfalls

The plan, even if accepted superficially, faces immense practical and political obstacles.

Intractable Issues – Key elements like the disarmament and demilitarization of Hamas and the establishment of a neutral, apolitical authority in Gaza are deeply contentious and have derailed past peace efforts.

Lack of Trust – The deep-seated enmity ensures that each side will likely find excuses to stall or abandon the process if it disadvantages them.

Logistical and Resource Burden – The plan requires a massive multinational stabilization force and international oversight, which faces challenges of legitimacy, coordination, and resources. Rebuilding Gaza's shattered infrastructure would be a monumental, long-term task vulnerable to ongoing violence.

Parallel to Ukraine – Trump's difficulties mirror his failed attempt in Ukraine, where his bold claims collided with the reality that neither Russia nor Ukraine would accept Washington's terms.

5. Conclusion – A Legacy of Bravado Over Substance

The article concludes that Trump's peacemaking style has distinct characteristics –

Assets – He brings immense political bravado, diplomatic energy, and the extraordinary leverage of US power. His high-stakes maneuvers create dramatic headlines and initial momentum.

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Deficiencies – He lacks the essential qualities of a successful peacemaker – persistence, a willingness to compromise, and a deep, nuanced understanding of conflict dynamics.

Ultimately, any peace plan's success depends on the combatants' willingness to make painful concessions, supported by internal political consensus. Trump's approach, focused on grand gestures rather than a sustained, patient process, is unlikely to overcome the entrenched enmities in conflicts as complex as those in Gaza or Ukraine.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/trump-gaza-peace-plan-netanyahu-hamas-10280155/>



Editorial of the Day – 02.10.2025

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1. India-Japan Partnership – Synergies, Challenges, and Future Prospects(The Hindu)
2. Tamil Nadu's Startup Revolution – A Case Study in Inclusive Innovation(Indian Express)

1. India-Japan Partnership – Synergies, Challenges, and Future Prospects

GS Paper 2 – International Relations. **Topic** – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Sub-topic – India-Japan Relations.

1. Introduction – A Partnership of Complementary Contrasts

The India-Japan "Special Strategic and Global Partnership" is set for a significant upgrade, underscored by Japan's target of investing 10 trillion yen (about ₹60,000 crore) in India over the next decade. Despite being studies in contrast—India being large, developing, and diverse, while Japan is small, developed, and homogenous—the two nations complement each other exceptionally well. The partnership is built on three key synergies – complementary demographics, a conflict-free history, and aligned geopolitical interests, particularly concerning the rise of China.

2. The Three Core Synergies Driving the Relationship

Diametrically Opposite Demographics – This is the primary economic synergy.

Japan – An aging economy (median age ~50 years) with a shrinking working-age population (59%). It is capital-rich and technology-intensive, with a high degree of automation (e.g., 1,531 robots per 10,000 employees in the auto industry).

India – A young nation (median age <30 years) with a stable and large working-age population (68%). It is labor-abundant and has vast land resources.

The Opportunity – This creates a perfect match where Japanese capital and technology can be combined with India's large workforce to create world-class manufacturing hubs.

A Harmonious History and Political Trust – The relationship is unburdened by any historical conflict or territorial disputes, making political negotiations smoother. Japanese brands like Sony and Mitsubishi are well-respected in India for their quality. The Maruti-Suzuki partnership stands as a landmark example of successful collaboration.

Geopolitical and Strategic Alignment

The China Factor – A key driver is the shared goal of reducing economic and strategic dependence on China. Both nations run significant trade deficits with China (Japan – \$46.5 billion; India – \$99.2 billion in 2024-25).

The Quad – Both are active members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) along with the US and Australia, working towards a peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific.

3. Challenges – Why Japanese FDI in India Underperforms

Despite the strong potential, Japanese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India has stagnated and remains significantly lower than in other regions.

Underwhelming FDI Figures – In the post-pandemic years (2022-24), India received a fraction of the Japanese FDI that went to ASEAN nations. For example, in 2024, India received \$5.3 billion compared to the \$28.7 billion invested in ASEAN.

Supply Chain and Quality Issues – A 2025 JETRO survey revealed that 76.4% of Japanese firms in India cited the "absence of suppliers that meet the quality and technical capabilities requirement" as a major problem. These firms rely heavily on Chinese inputs, and India's anti-dumping investigations against Chinese imports create sourcing uncertainty and increase costs.

Regulatory Hurdles – The Press Note 3 regulation (April 2020), which mandates government approval for investments from countries sharing a land border with India, has inadvertently affected Japanese firms. Japanese companies with any Chinese equity holdings or beneficial interest (e.g., as sourcing partners)

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face delays and are less likely to receive regulatory clearance, pushing them towards more open economies like those in ASEAN.

Future Avenues for Deepening Cooperation

The current global situation offers a prime opportunity to overcome these challenges and expand collaboration into new, critical areas.

Critical and Emerging Technologies -

Semiconductors - This is a key area of collaboration. Japan is a leader in manufacturing equipment and materials, while India needs capital and technology. This partnership can address Japan's labor shortage with India's pool of engineers.

Examples - Tata Electronics is partnering with Tokyo Electron for equipment and training, while Japanese chipmaker Renesas Electronics is working with the Indian government to skill engineering students. Other areas include Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital public infrastructure, and cybersecurity.

Integration in the Banking and Financial Sector -

Japanese megabanks are looking to expand into high-growth markets like India.

The landmark deal allowing Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp. (SMBC) to acquire a stake in Yes Bank sets a major precedent for foreign investment in India's banking sector.

This can inject much-needed capital, fintech expertise, and global governance standards into Indian banking.

5. Conclusion - Translating Potential into Reality

The India-Japan relationship is at an inflection point, with complementary interests and aligned geopolitical goals creating a historic opportunity. While high-level assurances are promising, the real challenge lies in addressing the on-ground issues of supply chain quality and regulatory hurdles. If these can be effectively resolved, the partnership has the potential to translate into transformative investment, job creation, and strategic depth, significantly benefiting both nations and contributing to stability in the Indo-Pacific.

2. Tamil Nadu's Startup Revolution - A Case Study in Inclusive Innovation

GS Paper 3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment. **Topic** - Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors.

Sub-topics - Startup Ecosystem, Inclusive Growth, Role of State Governments in Economic Development, Industrial Policy. **Relevance** - This article serves as an excellent case study on how a state government can systematically build a thriving, inclusive startup ecosystem.

1. Introduction - From Manufacturing Hub to Startup Leader

Tamil Nadu, traditionally known for its manufacturing excellence, has engineered a remarkable transformation into a leading startup hub in India. This success is not accidental but the result of a deliberate, systems-based strategy that has seen the state's DPIIT-registered startups grow six-fold in just four years (from 2,032 to over 12,100). This has propelled Tamil Nadu from an 'Emerging State' to a 'Best Performer' in the national States' Startup Ranking 2022. The state's vision is to nurture startups from being petitioners for opportunity to becoming partners in the state's growth, as exemplified by the journey of Torus Robotics.

2. The Three-Pillar Strategy for Building the Ecosystem

Tamil Nadu's success is anchored in a comprehensive three-pillar strategy implemented by its nodal agency, StartupTN.

Pillar 1 - State Capital as a Strategic Catalyst - The state uses its capital not just for funding but to strategically de-risk early-stage ventures and attract private investment.

Tamil Nadu Startup Seed Grant Fund (TANSEED) - Provides equity-free seed grants of ₹10 lakh to early-stage startups, with an enhanced grant of ₹15 lakh for women-led, green-tech, and rural ventures. This

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modest seed support has shown a 28X multiplier effect, with state funding of ₹18.79 crore attracting over ₹537 crore in further investments.

Frontier Sector Funds – Targeted funds like the Tamil Nadu Space Tech Fund (₹10 crore) offer milestone-based assistance to boost innovation in high-potential sectors.

Pillar 2 – Inclusion as a Core Strategy, Not Charity – Inclusion is woven into the architecture of the state's startup policy to ensure equitable growth.

Social Justice Initiatives – The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) Startup Fund (corpus enhanced to ₹50 crore) provides equity investments to level the playing field. This is complemented by the Periyar Social Justice Venture Lab, an accelerator for social enterprises from these communities.

Gender Parity – Thozhili bootcamps are conducted across the state to equip and support women entrepreneurs. Notably, 50% of all registered startups in the state are women-led.

Support for Marginalized Groups – Special Seed Grant Funds and structured mentorship are provided for physically challenged and transgender founders.

Rural Innovation – The Gramam Thorum Puthozhil (Establishing Start-ups in Villages) scheme aims to establish 100 startups in 100 villages, promoting decentralised entrepreneurship.

Pillar 3 – Building a Decentralised and Connected Ecosystem – The state has built physical and digital infrastructure to ensure that opportunities are not confined to a single city.

Physical Infrastructure – Ten regional startup hubs (in cities like Madurai, Tirunelveli, Erode) and 100 Pre-Incubation Centres in Tier-II/III/IV institutions have been established to bring infrastructure, mentors, and markets closer to entrepreneurs across the state.

Digital Rails –

1. **MentorTN** – A digital platform with over 320 mentors that has facilitated more than 1,120 hours of mentoring.
2. **TANFUND** – A portal connecting startups to over 300 investors, which has facilitated the raising of **₹127.09 crore** so far.

Academia-Industry Connect – StartupTN partners with the state's flagship skilling program, Naan Mudhalvan, to guide student projects from hackathons into commercially viable startups.

3. Ecosystem Enablers and Support Tools

Beyond the three pillars, several tools have been introduced to reduce friction for early-stage founders.

StartupTN Smart Card – Offers subsidised access to essential software and services.

Bilingual Call Centre – Provides crucial information in both Tamil and English.

BrandLabs – A course to help founders build strong brands.

Corporate Innovation Initiative – An open innovation portal connecting startups with large corporations like Bosch, Hero MotoCorp, and Daimler to solve real-world industry challenges.

4. The Way Forward – Tamil Nadu Global Startup Summit (TNGSS) 2025

To cement its position as a global startup destination, the state is hosting the TNGSS 2025 in Coimbatore (October 9-10, 2025). This summit aims to bring together over 30,000 global and domestic stakeholders. Key features include a first-of-its-kind AI-enabled matchmaking app to facilitate connections and inclusive infrastructure like crèches and feeding rooms to ensure a welcoming environment for all participants.

5. Conclusion

Tamil Nadu's journey to becoming a top-performing startup state demonstrates the power of a systematic, mission-driven approach. The state did not inherit a thriving startup engine; it built one by revitalizing its nodal agency, expanding its reach statewide, and making inclusion the very architecture of its growth model. By creating accessible and interconnected "rails of mentors, markets, and money,"

Tamil Nadu has created a robust and equitable ecosystem that serves as a model for other states to follow.



Editorial of the Day – 03.10.2025**Index****1. Technological Unemployment – Historical Patterns and the AI Challenge****2. Crafting India's Energy Policy – From Slogans to Strategy****1. Technological Unemployment – Historical Patterns and the AI Challenge**

GS Paper 3 – Indian Economy / Science and Technology Topics – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment; Awareness in the fields of IT, Computers, robotics; Science and Technology– developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

1. Introduction – A Recurring Historical Challenge

Technological unemployment, a term coined by economist John Maynard Keynes in 1930, refers to job loss caused by technological advancements. Keynes postulated that this occurs when our "discovery of means to economise labour" outpaces our ability to find "new uses for labour." This is not a new phenomenon but a recurring pattern throughout history, with the current wave of Artificial Intelligence (AI) bringing the issue back into sharp focus.

2. Historical Precedents of Technological Disruption

The article highlights several historical examples to show that resistance to job-displacing technology is a consistent theme, and often, the underlying technological cause is overlooked in favour of more visible political or social factors.

The Luddites (1811-1817) – The original protest against technological unemployment, where English textile workers destroyed automated looms that threatened their livelihoods. This has become a symbolic reference for anti-technology movements.

Indian Indigo Farmers (Pre-Independence) – While Mahatma Gandhi's Champaran Satyagraha is often framed as a fight against exploitative British planters, the article argues the root cause of low indigo prices was technological. German companies like Bayer and BASF had developed synthetic indigo from coal tar, making natural indigo cultivation economically unviable.

Bank Computerization in India (1978) – Over half a million bank employees went on strike to protest the introduction of computers, fearing mass job losses. Despite this resistance, the government pushed forward. The eventual outcome was not mass unemployment but a massive expansion of the banking sector, with population coverage increasing from under 10% to over 90% and the rise of digital banking.

Mumbai Textile Mill Strike (1982) – The widespread closure of Mumbai's cotton mills is often attributed to the bitter conflict between mill owners and the union leader Datta Samant. However, the article posits the fundamental reason was the market disruption caused by the arrival of cheaper and more durable synthetic cloths like nylon and polyester, which made cotton mills obsolete.

3. The Current Wave – Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Neo-Luddism

The contemporary wave of anxiety is centered around AI, with early signs of protest and concern emerging globally.

Modern Protests – Small-scale protests are already occurring, such as demonstrations outside the UK's Department of Science and OpenAI's office in San Francisco, with protesters demanding regulation and raising concerns about existential risks.

Concerns from Tech Pioneers – Even the creator of the World Wide Web, Tim Berners-Lee, has started a campaign for a more human-centric web, warning against threats from misinformation and the domination of big tech platforms.

4. The Core Challenge – The Regulatory Dilemma

The central question facing governments today, including in India, is how to regulate AI and other frontier technologies. The challenge lies in striking a delicate balance.

Risk of Over-regulation – Too much regulation could stifle innovation, slow down economic progress, and prevent society from reaping the immense potential benefits of AI in fields like healthcare, education, and logistics.

Risk of Under-regulation – Too little regulation could allow the technology to cause severe social disruption, exacerbate inequality, and "savagely act as a sword against humanity" through job losses and misuse.

5. Conclusion – Navigating the Future

History teaches us that technological disruption is inevitable and often brings long-term benefits despite short-term pain and resistance. However, the unprecedented speed, scale, and scope of the AI revolution present a unique challenge. A proactive, balanced, and well-thought-out regulatory framework is not just necessary but essential for governments to navigate this transition, ensuring that the benefits of AI are distributed widely while mitigating the risks of social and economic upheaval.

2. Crafting India's Energy Policy – From Slogans to Strategy

GS Paper 3 – Infrastructure – Energy; Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Topics – Energy Security, Government Policies and Interventions, Geopolitics of Energy, Critical Minerals, Renewable Energy.

1. Introduction – Defining the Goals

To effectively navigate the future, India's energy policy must be guided by a clear and pragmatic interpretation of the national slogans 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. The article argues for a nuanced understanding of these terms to create a robust policy roadmap that addresses economic, social, and environmental imperatives.

2. Decoding 'Viksit' and 'Atmanirbhar' in the Energy Context

'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) – In the energy sector, this must be interpreted more broadly than just economic metrics like GDP. It should encompass social inclusiveness (energy access for all) and environmental protection (a clean energy transition). India does not have the luxury to "develop first and clean up later."

'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India) – A crucial distinction must be made between 'self-sufficiency' and 'self-reliance'.

Self-Sufficiency (Producing what we consume) – This is an unrealistic and undesirable goal.

1. **Petroleum** – It's unrealistic. India's import dependency has increased from ~30% in the 1970s to ~85% today, despite efforts to boost domestic production.
2. **Coal** – While attainable (India has the 5th largest deposits), over-dependence on this highly polluting fuel would compromise the environmental goals of a 'Viksit Bharat'.

Self-Reliance (Ensuring access to energy) – This is a more pragmatic and achievable goal. It means creating a robust network of national and international relationships and assets to guarantee access to affordable, timely, and clean energy. A key new imperative of this approach is securing access to critical minerals essential for the green transition, such as nickel, cobalt, lithium, copper, and rare earths.

3. The Global Energy Backdrop – Key Realities for India

India's energy policy must be framed against a challenging global backdrop.

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Ecological Crisis – Global efforts to limit climate change have largely failed, with the 1.5°C temperature increase target already breached in 2024. As a country highly vulnerable to global warming, India has no choice but to support and participate in international collaborative efforts for environmental protection.

Weaponization of Energy and Geopolitical Hypocrisy – Globalization is in a 'comatose' state, leading to the weaponization of energy trade. The article highlights hypocrisy where the US sanctions India for buying Russian oil while purchasing from Venezuela, and EU nations buy Russian LNG while calling for sanctions. The key lesson is that opportunism is the bedrock of contemporary energy policy.

China's Emergence as an Energy Leviathan – China dominates the green energy supply chain. While critical minerals are mined in Africa, Latin America, and Australia, they are overwhelmingly processed and smelted in China. This makes the global green transition, and by extension India's, heavily dependent on China.

4. A Five-Point Strategy for 'Energy Atmanirbharta'

Based on this analysis, the article proposes five high-level strategic initiatives for the Indian government.

1. **Enact Legislation** – Pass an "Energy Atmanirbharta Act" to create a solid legal and institutional framework for the country's energy security goals.
2. **Create Strategic Stockpiles** – Establish a strategic stockpile of critical minerals and metals, analogous to the existing Strategic Petroleum Reserves, to buffer against supply chain disruptions.
3. **Aggressively Acquire Overseas Assets** – Disproportionately invest public funds in acquiring, controlling, or managing international energy assets, including mines for critical minerals. The full weight of the Indian state (diplomatic and financial) should back these efforts.
4. **Boost R&D and Innovation** – Massively increase public investment in energy research and technology. Replicate and institutionalize the global model of successful Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) involving government departments, academia, research labs, and private businesses.
5. **Strengthen the Domestic Ecosystem** – Undertake domestic reforms to simplify the regulatory environment, ensure easy access to factors of production (land, capital), guarantee contract sanctity, and contemporize the workforce (e.g., training more solar maintenance engineers).

5. Conclusion

For India to achieve genuine energy security, it must shift its policy focus from the unrealistic goal of 'self-sufficiency' to the pragmatic pursuit of 'self-reliance'. This requires a clear-eyed understanding of the volatile global landscape and the implementation of a comprehensive strategy that combines aggressive overseas asset acquisition, robust domestic reforms, and a major push for technological innovation.

Editorial of the Day – 04.10.2025

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1. South – South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) (The hindu)

2. Trump's 20 point Peace Proposal (The Indian Express)

1. South – South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)

TOPIC - GS2/International Relations

The South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) has emerged as a transformative force in global development in shifting geopolitical landscapes, widening inequalities, and dwindling development aid.

About the South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)

Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA), 1978 enshrined principles of mutual respect, shared learning, and solidarity, far from being a transactional model among developing nations.

Nairobi Outcome Document (2009) – It was negotiated in the UN High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation in Nairobi, Kenya and adopted by the UNGA. It defined the principles guiding how cooperation among developing countries (South-South cooperation) operates, expanding beyond technical assistance to encompass political, institutional, and infrastructural cooperation.

The South-South Cooperation (SSC) is defined as a process where two or more developing countries pursue individual or shared capacity development objectives through knowledge exchange, skills, resources, and technical know-how. It involves governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector. It acts as a complement, not a substitute, to North-South cooperation. Triangular Cooperation is defined as 'Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries, supported by a developed country or multilateral organization'. It provides financial, technical, and experiential support to strengthen Southern partnerships and promote regional integration.

Key Principles of South-South Cooperation

1. Common endeavor based on shared experiences, solidarity, and objectives.
2. Respect for national sovereignty, ownership, and priorities.
3. Partnerships among equals, free from conditionalities.
4. Mutual accountability and transparency, aligned with development projects on the ground.
5. Multi-stakeholder engagement – NGOs, private sector, civil society, academia.
6. Theme (2025) – 'New Opportunities and Innovation through SSTC'

Contemporary Relevance of SSTC

A Response to Global Challenges – Over 800 million people still live in extreme poverty, and many developing nations spend more on debt servicing than on essential services like health and education. SSTC provides homegrown, scalable solutions tailored to local realities—from climate-smart agriculture to digital finance and health innovations.

Empowerment Through Solidarity – SSTC is built on mutual respect, shared learning, and sovereignty, unlike traditional aid models that often come with conditions. It fosters self-reliance and resilience, enabling countries to co-create solutions rather than depend on external prescriptions.

Catalyst for the SDGs – SSTC is a key engine for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, especially as traditional aid flows decline. It's transforming sectors like agriculture, health, education, and technology through locally owned, cost-effective innovations.

Key Concerns and Challenges in SSTC

Fragmentation and Lack of Coordination – Diverse political systems, economic priorities, and historical contexts often lead to fragmented efforts and difficulty in forming unified positions on global issues. It can dilute the impact of SSTC initiatives and hinder the creation of cohesive platforms for collaboration.

Limited Institutional Capacity – Many developing countries lack the technical, financial, and institutional capacity to implement and sustain SSTC projects. Fiscal constraints and evolving geopolitical dynamics pose serious challenges to collective action.

Funding and Resource Gaps – SSTC often relies on trust funds and voluntary contributions, such as the India-UN Development Partnership Fund or the IBSA Fund. These mechanisms are not always predictable or sufficient to meet growing development needs.

Political Will and Follow-Through – There are concerns about inconsistent follow-through on commitments, while countries like India have shown strong rhetorical support for SSTC. For example, the India-Africa Forum Summit has been overdue since 2015, raising questions about sustained engagement.

Triangular Cooperation Complexities – Involving developed countries or multilateral organizations adds value but introduces power asymmetries and bureaucratic hurdles.

Role of United Nations (UN) & UNDP

The United Nations commemorates SSTC on September 12, recognizing its role in fostering inclusive partnerships and sustainable development.

UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) – It supports coherence and coordination of SSC and TrC initiatives.

UNDP incorporated SSTC as a core working approach in its Strategic Plan (2014–2017).

1. It serves as an operational arm to support SSTC at global, regional, and country levels.
2. UNDP acts as Knowledge Broker, Capacity Development Supporter, and Partnership Facilitator.

India's Role and Philosophy

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) – India's evolution from a food-deficit to a food-surplus economy – underpinned by one of the world's largest food safety nets – illustrates the power of indigenous solutions. Its philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) aligns with SSTC's values of inclusion and cooperation. India has emerged as a hub for cost-effective, locally relevant innovations in digital transformation, climate resilience, health systems, and sustainable financing.

Key Contributions

1. Hosting the Voice of the Global South Summits;
2. Securing permanent membership for the African Union during its G20 presidency;
3. Establishing the Development Partnership Administration;
4. Scaling the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme in 160+ countries;
5. Launching the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and sharing digital innovations such as Aadhaar and UPI globally.

India-WFP Partnership – India and the World Food Programme (WFP) have co-created solutions with global relevance for more than six decades. It piloted innovations such as –

1. Annapurta (Grain ATMs);
2. Supply chain optimisation in food distribution;

3. Women-led Take-Home Ration programme;
4. National rice fortification project;

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/sstc-is-more-than-a-diplomatic-phrase/article70109816.ece>

2. Trump's 20 point Peace Proposal

Recently, US President Donald Trump unveiled a 20-point peace proposal, dubbed as 'Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict' aimed at ending the protracted war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

About Gaza Conflict - Gaza, a narrow coastal strip in West Asia, often referred to as the Middle East. It was once a thriving mosaic of Arab, Turkish, Persian, and Jewish cultures. The Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) and the Balfour Declaration by Britain (1917) laid the groundwork for territorial fragmentation and Zionist settlement in Palestine. Gaza became a focal point of resistance following Israel's establishment in 1948 and subsequent wars, and has witnessed multiple wars with thousands of casualties and widespread destruction. The current crisis escalated on October 7, 2023, when Hamas, the Palestinian militant group governing Gaza, launched a surprise attack on Israel, killing over 1,200 people and taking 250 hostages. It has drawn in actors like Hezbollah (Lebanon), Iran, and the US, turning Gaza into a geopolitical battleground.

Core Elements of the Gaza Peace Plan Announced By Trump

Hamas Disarmament and Amnesty - The Plan demands disarmament and surrender of Hamas and relinquish control of Gaza. Members pledging peaceful coexistence will be granted amnesty, while those wishing to leave Gaza will receive safe passage to countries such as Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, or Iran.

International Stabilization Force (ISF) - A temporary International Stabilization Force (ISF), supported by the US, Arab partners, Jordan, and Egypt, will replace Israeli troops in Gaza. The ISF aims to secure borders, prevent arms smuggling, and train vetted Palestinian police. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) will gradually withdraw, maintaining only a 'security perimeter presence' until full stability is ensured.

Transitional Governance - Governance of Gaza will shift to a technocratic, apolitical Palestinian committee, supervised by an international 'Board of Peace' led by Trump himself.

Humanitarian Relief and Reconstruction - The plan allows unrestricted humanitarian aid, focusing on infrastructure rehabilitation, hospitals, food supply chains, and road clearance. Aid will be delivered via the UN and Red Crescent without interference.

Hostage-Prisoner Exchange - All hostages must be returned within 72 hours of Israel's acceptance. In exchange, Israel will release 250 life-term prisoners and 1,700 Gazans detained post-October 7, including all women and children. Remains of hostages will be exchanged at a ratio of 1 Israeli to 15 Palestinians.

Regional and International Guarantees - Eight countries — Qatar, Jordan, UAE, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt — have welcomed the plan.

1. China and Russia expressed support.
2. Guarantees will be provided to ensure Gaza remains free from future militant threats.

Challenges to Implementing Trump's Gaza Peace Plan

Hamas's Reluctance to Disarm and Cede Power - Hamas's deep-rooted presence, ideological stance and role in armed resistance in the region are seen as the most formidable hurdle.

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Regional Opposition to Forced Resettlement – Trump's suggestion that Palestinians could be relocated outside Gaza was swiftly rejected by key regional players like Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. These nations emphasized the right of Palestinians to remain in Gaza, opposing any form of displacement.

Security and Sovereignty Concerns – The proposed plan for International Stabilization Force (ISF) until Gaza is deemed safe could be interpreted as a de facto Israeli occupation, undermining Palestinian sovereignty and fueling distrust.

Clarity and Operational Details – The plan lacks timelines, maps, and enforcement mechanisms, raising doubts about its feasibility. Trump did not take questions during the announcement, leaving many aspects of the plan ambiguous.

Political Implications of Trump's Gaza Peace Plan

Israel's Political Calculus – The plan demands Hamas's complete disarmament and exclusion from Gaza's future governance, a stance that could deepen internal Israeli debates over long-term strategy.

Palestinian Governance Shift – Gaza would be governed by an apolitical Palestinian committee under international oversight, sidelining both Hamas and the Palestinian Authority until reforms are complete. The plan hints at a 'credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination', a politically sensitive proposition that could reignite debates over a two-state solution.

Regional Diplomacy and Realignment – Egypt, Jordan, and Qatar are expected to facilitate Hamas's safe exit and support reconstruction, signaling a shift toward more active Arab mediation. The plan implicitly sidelines Iran, which backs Hamas, potentially altering the balance of influence in West Asia.

For Trump – The plan could boost Trump's legacy and ambitions for a Nobel Peace Prize, reminiscent of the Oslo Accords, if successful. However, it carries a business dimension, with opportunities for large-scale reconstruction projects in Gaza.

Implications on India

Diplomatic Alignment and Global Standing – India welcomed the plan, calling it a 'viable pathway to long-term and sustainable peace' in West Asia. India's endorsement reflects its balanced diplomacy—maintaining ties with both Israel and Arab nations like Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.

Strategic and Security Interests – The plan's emphasis on counterterrorism and deradicalization aligns with India's own security concerns, especially regarding cross-border extremism. Israel noted that the plan reflects shared values between India and Israel, including the fight against terrorism.

Economic and Infrastructure Opportunities – India's expertise in infrastructure development could play a key role in Gaza's reconstruction. Peace in West Asia would boost India's ambitions for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, facilitating trade and connectivity.

Regional Stability and Diaspora Welfare – West Asia hosts over 9 million Indians, making regional stability crucial for their safety and economic well-being. The region supplies about 80% of India's oil, so peace could stabilize energy prices and ensure uninterrupted supply chains. However, Pakistan's prominent role in the Gaza plan raises concerns for India.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-from-citizenship-check-fears-to-wider-voter-inclusion-how-ec-course-corrected-on-bihar-sir-10281095/?ref=infinite>

Editorial of the Day – 06.10.2025

Index

1. Disaster Management(The Hindu)

2. Issues Related To Health(The Indian Express)

1. Disaster Management

India is moving beyond reactive relief efforts to a proactive, multi-layered strategy that integrates prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and recovery, reflecting a growing recognition of the complex risks posed by climate change, urbanization, and natural hazards.

India's Disaster Preparedness

India's approach to disaster preparedness has evolved into a robust, multi-tiered framework led by the Union Home Ministry (MHA), with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) at its core. India's strategy emphasizes prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response—ensuring that resilience is not just reactive but deeply embedded in national development, anchored in the Disaster Management Act of 2005.

NDMA and the Disaster Management Act, 2005

The NDMA, established under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, operates through five key divisions – Policy & Plans, Mitigation, Operations & Communications, Information & Technology, and Finance & Administration.

Its vision is to build a safer and disaster-resilient India through –

1. A technology-driven, multi-hazard, and multi-sectoral strategy;
2. Empowerment of stakeholders at all levels—central, state, district, and community;
3. Integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) into development planning;

Shift in Policy – From Relief to Resilience

Financial Architecture for Resilience – The 15th Finance Commission's allocation of ₹2.28 lakh crore (\$30 billion) over five years marks a pivotal moment in aligning public finance with DRR. Rather than focusing solely on post-disaster relief, the Finance Commission divided funding across –

1. Preparedness and Capacity Building (10%);
2. Mitigation (20%);
3. Response (40%);
4. Reconstruction (30%);

It ensures that resilience is embedded into every stage of disaster management—from early warning systems to rebuilding efforts.

Building the Budget-to-Project Pipeline – The Commission identified five priority areas to ensure efficiency and accountability in DRR financing –

1. Prioritising multi-hazard challenges across India's diverse regions.
2. Integrating scientific mitigation concepts into fiscal planning.
3. Avoiding duplication with existing central or state schemes.
4. Strengthening inter-ministerial and Centre-State coordination.
5. Establishing light-touch regulatory mechanisms for timely project implementation.

By 2025, inter-ministerial and Centre-State appraisal committees were operational for all region- or hazard-specific projects, ensuring a transparent and science-driven approach.

Progress in Reconstruction and Mitigation

Reconstruction Initiatives – Over the past two years, the MHA approved ₹5,000 crore in reconstruction packages for Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam, and Kerala. These projects focus on rebuilding climate-resilient infrastructure and assessing damages caused by extreme precipitation events.

Nature-Based Mitigation Programmes – Under the 20% mitigation fund, projects worth ₹10,000 crore (\$1.2 billion) have been approved to promote nature-based and sustainable solutions. These efforts built upon the National Cyclone Mitigation Programme (2011–22), which successfully reduced coastal vulnerability through cyclone shelters, embankments, and early warning systems.

Initiatives include –

1. Revitalising water bodies and green spaces to mitigate urban flooding.
2. Monitoring glacial lakes using remote sensing and automated weather stations.
3. Applying bioengineering techniques for slope stabilization in landslide-prone areas.
4. Rejuvenating beels (wetlands) along the Brahmaputra River.
5. Preventing forest fires through fuel evacuation and water body restoration.

Strengthening Preparedness and Capacity Building

Institutional and Community Training – Preparedness and capacity-building funds (₹5,000 crore) have focused on –

1. Modernising fire safety infrastructure.
2. Training 2.5 lakh volunteers under the Apda Mitra and Yuva Apda Mitra programmes.
3. Expanding research and training through the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM).

NIDM now offers a standardized curriculum across 36 streams of disaster management, with the goal of mainstreaming DRR education down to the panchayat level.

Expanding the Knowledge Network – The 327-member university network, along with the NDRF Academy and National Fire Service College, plays a crucial role in training public servants, conducting mock exercises, and promoting hazard-specific awareness and school safety programmes.

Coastal Resilience and Vulnerable Communities – At the ICDRI 2025 summit, India spotlighted the vulnerability of coastal regions and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). With nearly 90% of global trade moving by sea and coastal GDP projected to double by 2030, the stakes are high. India is supporting SIDS with resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, and water security measures, while advocating for a global digital repository of best practices.

Enhancing Early Warning and Communication Systems – Technological innovation has dramatically improved India's early warning capabilities, reducing casualties and improving community preparedness. The multi-media Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) delivers timely alerts in regional languages, ensuring last-mile communication even in remote areas.

International Cooperation and Global Leadership – India's commitment to the UN's Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction is evident in its international advocacy. Leadership in G-20, SCO, BIMSTEC, and IORA initiatives. During the G-20 presidency, India spearheaded the creation of the first Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group, focusing on –

1. Early warning systems;
2. Disaster-resilient infrastructure;
3. Financing for DRR;
4. Resilient recovery;
5. Nature-based solutions;

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These platforms help India exchange best practices and develop global frameworks for climate resilience and sustainable risk management.

Conclusion

India's approach to disaster risk reduction represents a paradigm shift — from reactive disaster response to proactive resilience-building. Through robust financial planning, scientific integration, and international cooperation, India is constructing a future-ready DRR ecosystem. By emphasizing community participation, nature-based solutions, and technological innovation, the nation is progressively de-risking its complex hazard landscape and positioning itself as a global leader in climate resilience.

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/indias-direction-for-disaster-resilience/article70128332.ece>

2. Issues Related To Health

Topic - GS2/Governance

Recent tragic incidents involving contaminated cough syrup and the resulting deaths of several children have placed India's reputation as the 'pharmacy to the world' under scrutiny.

About India's Pharmaceutical Industry

India's pharmaceutical industry stands as a global powerhouse — renowned for its scale, affordability, and innovation. India supplies affordable medicines to over 200 countries and contributes significantly to domestic and international public health. India's pharmaceutical exports are vital to low- and middle-income countries.

Scale and Reach

According to the Department of Pharmaceuticals, India ranks - 3rd globally by volume of pharmaceutical production; 14th by value, reflecting its cost-efficiency and mass-scale manufacturing; As of FY 2023-24 - The industry is valued at USD 50 billion; Domestic consumption accounts for USD 23.5 billion; Exports contribute USD 26.5 billion, with major markets including the U.S., Europe, and Africa;

Future Projection - Industry growth to USD 130 billion by 2030; A potential USD 450 billion valuation by 2047, aligning with India's centennial independence goals;

Global Leadership - India supplies -

1. Over 50% of global vaccine demand;
2. Around 40% of U.S. generic drug consumption;
3. A significant share of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and biosimilars;

Key Issues & Challenges Around India's Pharma Industry

Issues of Safety - It includes the contamination of cough syrups with toxic industrial solvents to the seizure of counterfeit cancer drugs in Telangana. In one incident, diethylene glycol (DEG) and ethylene glycol (EG) — toxic industrial chemicals used in paints and brake fluids — were found in pediatric medicine, leading to the deaths of several children. These incidents are not isolated; they point to systemic failures in oversight, quality control, and enforcement.

Recurrent and Preventable Crisis - Similar incidents in The Gambia (2022) and Uzbekistan (2022), which killed nearly 90 children combined, were traced back to Indian-made cough syrups. Investigations by the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed 'unacceptable levels' of these toxins. India introduced mandatory pre-export testing for cough syrups in 2023 — but only for export-bound batches, which left domestic products largely unchecked.

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Fragmented Oversight and Weak Enforcement – India's drug regulation is governed by the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940, with responsibilities split between centre and state-level authorities. This dual structure has led to –

1. Jurisdictional confusion, with unclear accountability.
2. Inconsistent inspections and licensing standards across states.
3. Reactive governance, where enforcement follows public outcry rather than proactive monitoring.

Threat to India's Pharmaceutical Credibility – India supplies about 40% of generic medicines in the US; 25% in the UK; and 90% in Africa. The combination of lax oversight, fake drug markets, and profit-driven shortcuts risks undermining India's hard-won global standing in pharmaceuticals.

Regulatory Framework in India

Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) – It is a national regulatory authority responsible for drug approvals, clinical trials, import control, and coordination with state regulators under the MoH&FW. It oversees compliance with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules, 1945.

State Drug Control Authorities – Handle licensing, inspections, and enforcement at the state level; Work in tandem with CDSCO to ensure uniform implementation of drug laws;

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) – Regulates prices of essential medicines under the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO); Ensures affordability and accessibility of key drugs

Legal Framework

Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 – Governs manufacture, sale, and distribution of drugs and cosmetics; Includes provisions for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Laboratory Practices (GLP);

New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019 – Streamlines clinical trial approvals and compensation mechanisms; Introduces timelines for regulatory decisions and waivers for certain drug categories

Schedule M & Schedule Y –

Schedule M – Standards for manufacturing practices;

Schedule Y – Guidelines for clinical trial conduct and ethics;

Reforms and Policy Initiatives

National Pharmaceutical Policy (Draft 2023) – It focuses on regulatory efficiency, innovation, and global competitiveness; Emphasizes self-reliance in Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and biosimilars;

Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme – It encourages domestic manufacturing of critical drugs and raw materials

Pharmaceutical Technology Upgradation Assistance Scheme (PTUAS) – It supports SMEs in upgrading to WHO-GMP standards

Promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma-MedTech (PRIP) – It aims to build a robust R&D ecosystem.

Innovation & R&D – Establishment of National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPERs); Launch of the National Policy on R&D and Innovation in Pharma-MedTech (2023);

Global Alignment – India is increasingly aligning its regulatory practices with international standards –

1. Collaboration with WHO, US FDA, and EMA;
2. Adoption of ICH guidelines for drug development and safety;
3. Participation in global pharmacovigilance networks;

Way Forward

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Rebuilding trust requires more than punitive action after each tragedy. India needs to –

1. Enforce uniform quality standards for both domestic and export markets.
2. Empower and reform the CDSCO to function independently of political and industrial pressures.
3. Mandate transparency in drug testing and recall data.
4. Establish accountability chains linking manufacturers, distributors, and regulators.

India's claim to being the world's reliable medicine supplier will continue to ring hollow, without such reforms.

Source – <https://www.newindianexpress.com/editorials/2025/Oct/08/punish-the-guilty-in-lethal-drug-case-fix-the-system>



Editorial of the Day – 07.10.2025**Index****1. Investment Models****2. Creative Capitalism – Redefining Capitalism With Compassion****1. Investment Models****Topic – GS3/Economy**

The ongoing global economic uncertainty, marked by protectionist measures and trade distortions demands a shift toward an inclusive economic system—one that prioritizes public welfare alongside private capital interests.

About the Indian Capital Investment – Rethinking Growth and Demand

Economic growth relies on expanding supply with robust and inclusive demand. Historically, three processes shaped the global capitalist system –

1. The creation of a wage-labour class;
2. Productivity gains from industrial mass production; and,
3. Rising demand through income growth.

In the modern and globalized world, aggregate demand has both domestic and external components. India's focus needs to turn inward – stimulating domestic demand through investment, fair wage growth, and innovation-driven productivity, with exports under pressure from global uncertainties.

Need of Domestic Investment

Reviving Private Investment – Indian private investment has stagnated, despite record-high profits.

Between FY20 and FY25, public capital expenditure grew at a robust CAGR of 25%, while private investment lagged behind. Domestic firms accounted for 94% of private sector investment announcements in the first half of FY26, up from 77% in 2018–19. Indian outward FDI grew at a CAGR of 12.6% – higher than domestic investment growth – indicating capital's preference for foreign markets.

Ensuring Moderate Wage Growth – The Economic Survey 2024–25 highlighted a widening gap between corporate profits and wages. While profits reached a 15-year high, wage growth stagnated, weakening purchasing power and suppressing domestic demand. Moreover, the increasing contractualisation of formal sector jobs has diluted workers' bargaining power.

Strengthening Research and Development (R&D) – India's gross R&D expenditure stands at 0.64% of GDP, with only 36% contributed by the private sector—far below global benchmarks where businesses drive over 70% of R&D spending.

Declining Trend of FDI – Net FDI inflows have sharply declined—from \$84.8 billion in FY 2021–22 to just \$0.4 billion retained in FY 2024–25 after repatriations; Disinvestments surged by 51% in FY 2023–24 and rose again in FY 2024–25; Short-term profit-seeking behavior has replaced long-term strategic commitments;

Demand-Side Weakness – Weak consumer sentiment and uneven post-pandemic recovery have dampened domestic consumption.

Regulatory and Policy Bottlenecks – Issues like land acquisition delays, complex tax structures, and inconsistent enforcement of regulations continue to deter investment.

Why Does Domestic Investment Matters?

Stimulating Demand – Domestic capital can fuel internal consumption, creating a virtuous cycle of growth.

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Job Creation – Investment in manufacturing and services directly translates to employment opportunities.

Resilience Against Global Shocks – With FDI showing signs of retreat, domestic capital can anchor stability.

Confidence Signaling – When Indian firms invest at home, it sends a strong message to global investors about the country's prospects. Domestic investment offers several advantages –

Stability – Less prone to sudden withdrawals;

Alignment With National Priorities – More likely to invest in infrastructure, manufacturing, and employment-generating sectors;

Multiplier Effect – Stimulates local demand and entrepreneurship;

Government Initiatives to Bridge the Gap

Make in India – Promotes manufacturing and innovation;

Production-Linked Incentives (PLI) – Encourages domestic production in key sectors;

Ease of Doing Business reforms – Simplifies compliance and reduces red tape;

Invest India – A facilitation platform for investors

Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023–24 Scheme allocated ₹1.3 lakh crore in interest-free loans to states for infrastructure projects in health, education, transport, and water supply. Public capital expenditure surged from ₹3.4 lakh crore in FY20 to ₹10.2 lakh crore projected for FY25—a compound annual growth rate of 25%.

Road Ahead – Indian capital needs to evolve – beyond profit maximization – prioritizing national development over narrow profit motives. It means –

1. Investing in underserved regions;
2. Supporting innovation and startups;
3. Partnering with government initiatives;
4. Prioritizing long-term national interest over short-term returns;

Inclusivity, innovation, and domestic reinvestment should define the new phase of capitalism that can help India achieve a \$30 trillion economy by 2047.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/why-indian-capital-needs-to-invest-domestically/article70135134.ece>

2. Creative Capitalism – Redefining Capitalism With Compassion

TOPIC – GS3/ECONOMY

The legacy of Ratan Tata, whose first death anniversary falls on October 9, continues to shape the contours of Indian industry and social enterprise through what has come to be known as Creative Capitalism – a philosophy that blends market forces with moral responsibility to uplift the underserved.

About Creative Capitalism – Creative Capitalism was coined by Bill Gates in a 2008 address at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, by arguing that capitalism's traditional focus on profit maximization needs to evolve to address pressing global inequities. It is a reimagined philosophy that seeks to align profit with purpose, innovation with inclusion, and growth with equity. It is a hybrid model that bridges market mechanisms and moral imperatives, and proposes that businesses, governments, and nonprofits collaborate to extend the reach of market forces to underserved populations.

Creative Capitalism in India – India's economic transformation post-1991 liberalization created fertile ground for Creative Capitalism. Tata Group became a model of stakeholder capitalism, balancing commercial success with social impact. Later on Infosys Foundation, startups and legacy firms are

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embedding social purpose into their business models. The private sector is increasingly solving public problems, from fintech platforms offering microloans to underserved communities, to edtech ventures bridging the education gap in rural India.

Benefits of Creative Capitalism

Inclusive Growth and Social Innovation – Creative capitalism promotes inclusive growth, by encouraging firms to serve underserved markets. Initiatives such as Microsoft's Affordable Access Initiative and Grameen Bank's microfinance model illustrate how companies can drive innovation for low-income populations.

Corporate Reputation and Trust – Firms practicing creative capitalism often gain reputational capital, strengthening brand loyalty and stakeholder trust. Consumers increasingly prefer companies demonstrating ethical leadership and social purpose.

New Market Opportunities – Serving the 'bottom of the pyramid' opens untapped markets. For instance, Unilever's Project Shakti in India empowered rural women entrepreneurs while expanding distribution networks – creating both economic and social value.

Enhanced Collaboration between Public and Private Sectors – Creative capitalism fosters public-private partnerships where businesses, governments, and NGOs collaborate on issues like education, healthcare, and sustainability. The Gates Foundation's partnerships with pharmaceutical firms to develop affordable vaccines exemplify this synergy.

Driving Structural Changes – Firms adopting creative capitalism not only enhance Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) but also drive structural change within global capitalism.

Challenges of Creative Capitalism

Profit-Social Mission Conflict – Balancing shareholder returns with social objectives is difficult. Firms may prioritize profit under the guise of social responsibility without robust governance.

Measurement and Accountability – Quantifying social impact remains complex. Many companies lack transparent metrics for evaluating their social initiatives, leading to 'impact-washing'.

Short-termism in Corporate Strategy – Shareholder pressure for quarterly profits can discourage long-term social investments, especially when returns are uncertain or indirect.

Dependence on Philanthropic Capital – In developing economies, creative capitalism often depends on philanthropic subsidies or donor-backed initiatives—raising questions about sustainability once funding ceases.

Case Studies

Gates Foundation & Big Pharma – Collaborations to produce low-cost vaccines have improved global health outcomes, demonstrating the practical potential of creative capitalism in saving millions of lives.

Google.org's Renewable Energy Projects – The blending of corporate expertise and social objectives shows how innovation can serve environmental and social goals simultaneously.

Future Outlook – Creative capitalism offers a transformative framework for reimagining corporate purpose in the 21st century. It continues to evolve through Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investing, and impact entrepreneurship. The future challenge lies in institutionalizing accountability mechanisms to ensure that profit and purpose coexist sustainably. It introduces moral innovation into economic logic—urging businesses to 'do well by doing good', while it cannot entirely replace market dynamics. The path forward requires aligning incentives, transparency, and long-term commitment to ensure creative capitalism remains both ethical and effective.

Source – <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/pioneer-of-creative-capitalism/article70140619.ece>

Editorial of the Day – 08.10.2025

Index

1. **Atmanirbharata – Self Reliance (The Hindu)**
2. **India's New Railway Links with Bhutan Matter (The Indian Express)**

1. Atmanirbharata – Self Reliance

Atmanirbharata, central to India's philosophy and progress, has historically transformed crises into capabilities. Amid global volatility, self-reliance in finance, technology, and defence is vital to mobilise domestic resources and ensure sustainable, resilient national growth.

Background

Atmanirbharata as a Philosophy – Self-reliance has been central to India's journey, not only as an economic plan but as a way of existence. India has embraced Atmanirbharata with renewed focus, turning ambitious ideas into tangible achievements across sectors.

Historical Milestones of Self-Reliance –

1. **Green Revolution (1960s)** – Ensured food security during droughts.
2. **Digital Transformation (1990s)** – Leveraged talent for national strength.
3. **COVID-19 Pandemic** – Rapid development of indigenous vaccines showcased scientific and manufacturing self-reliance.
4. **Defence Sector** – India advancing towards self-reliance in defence systems.

Need for Financial Self-Reliance

Global Investment Volatility – FDI over \$1 trillion since 2000, but 2024 saw 11% drop in flows and 27% fall in project finance deals.

Risks of External Dependence – Foreign portfolio investments remain volatile, highlighting the need to mobilise domestic resources.

Principle – Unlocking Bharat's wealth is essential to fuel national growth.

Gold as a Strategic Asset

Current Status – Indian households collectively hold close to 25,000 tonnes of gold, the largest private reserve globally, valued at about \$2.4 trillion (over 55% of India's GDP in FY26 terms).

Paradox – Despite this, India imports around 87% of its gold demand, contributing 8% to the total import bill. Between 2010–2013, gold imports accounted for nearly a third of the trade deficit.

Opportunity – This paradox presents a unique chance to mobilise domestic gold for economic growth. Cultural and civilisational attachment to gold requires trust-based, non-coercive mobilisation strategies rather than restrictions.

Revitalising Gold Monetisation – Successful models include investing in assaying facilities, creating innovative gold savings products, and digitising gold flows via mobile apps to bring private gold into formal financial channels.

About Gold Monetisation Scheme – The Gold Monetization Scheme allows individuals to deposit gold in banks and earn interest. The previous attempts failed due to lack of trust and facilities.

Roadmap for Gold Monetisation

Infrastructure – Expand hallmarking and purity testing centres for reliable valuation.

Logistics – Banks to manage funds, while secure centres handle gold movement.

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

Digitalisation – Enable households to track gold deposits like bank balances.

Trust – Simplify procedures, remove GST and customs friction, ensure direct returns to depositors.

Impact of Revived Gold Monetisation

Lower Borrowing – Funds raised through gold monetisation could cost 4.5%–6.5%, lower than international borrowing.

Ease Pressure – Mobilising even a fraction of household gold could ease import pressures, strengthen the current account, and create a vast pool of domestic capital for infrastructure, manufacturing, and innovation. There will be an overall shift in mindset toward “Bharat Can Fund Bharat”

Way Forward

Infrastructure – Expand hallmarking and purity testing centres to ensure trusted valuation nationwide.

Logistics – Banks can manage funds, while secure collection and testing centres handle gold movement.

Digitalisation – Household depositors should be able to track their gold balances as easily as bank accounts.

Trust – Simplify processes by reducing GST and customs scrutiny, ensuring direct returns to depositors without hidden costs.

Conclusion

Bharat can fuel its own growth by harnessing domestic wealth, ingenuity, and resilience. Trust, foresight, and determination will make India truly self-reliant, defining its development on its own terms.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-path-to-progress-that-is-paved-with-gold/article70136341.ece>

2. India's New Railway Links With Bhutan Matter

TOPIC – GS3/ Economy and International relation

Recently, India announced plans to build two cross-border rail lines to Bhutan.

About the New Rail Lines

Strategic Significance – Bhutan is a landlocked country, and the rail line will connect it to India's vast rail network and to Indian ports.

Routes – The total length is about 89 km.

1. Kokrajhar (Assam, India) to Gelephu (Bhutan) – A 69 km line.
2. Banarhat (West Bengal, India) to Samtse (Bhutan) – A 20 km line.

Timeline – The rail lines are expected to be completed within three to four years.

Advantages of the New Rail Lines

Trade and Logistics – It will boost trade by allowing goods to be transported more easily and in larger quantities by trains, compared to existing road routes.

Connectivity – It will give landlocked Bhutan direct access to Indian ports.

Tourism and Jobs – The lines will increase tourism to Bhutan, generating employment for Bhutanese citizens.

India's Policy – The project is a major example of India's Neighbourhood First Policy.

Security – The rail line provides India with an alternative route to connect with its North East Region. This is vital for security, as the Siliguri Corridor (or Chicken Neck), which currently links mainland India to the North East, is extremely narrow (22 km wide at one point) and is a significant security threat.

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Indian Infrastructure Strategy – India is developing railways, roads, bridges, and tunnels along borders with China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Bhutan. Key projects include the Sela Tunnel and the Darbuk–Shyok–Daulat Beg Oldie (DS–DBO) road, aimed at bridging the infrastructure gap with China

The China Factor

Bhutan–China Diplomatic Status – Bhutan is the only country with which China currently does not have diplomatic relations.

China’s Attempts to Influence Bhutan – China has been actively attempting to gain influence in Bhutan, particularly after the 2017 Doklam standoff. China is also expanding infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and in South Asia under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including a railway connecting Xinjiang to Tibet near Ladakh.

India’s Strategic Response – India’s rail line project is a proactive effort to counter China’s influence in the region.

Challenges In Implementation of Rail Line To Bhutan

Topographical and Engineering Hurdles – The rail line must pass through the difficult, mountainous terrain of Bhutan, which requires high engineering standards, especially since the region is a seismic zone prone to earthquakes.

Land Acquisition – Securing land for the project, particularly in India, presents difficulties.

Bureaucratic Delays – Despite the estimated ₹4,000 crore cost, bureaucratic red tape could stall the project.

System Standardization – Issues related to standardizing complex systems, such as the differing signalling systems used by Indian and Bhutanese rail networks, will need to be managed.

Political Risk – Bhutan’s domestic politics or shifts in public sentiment could potentially lead to the government deciding against continuing the rail link.

Funding and Execution – India is providing the entire funding for the project (even aid provided to Bhutan will be used to fund their share). India must ensure timely implementation within the 3–4 year timeframe, as India is often criticised for delays in infrastructure projects compared to China’s rapid execution

Conclusion

The India–Bhutan cross-border railways strengthen economic development, trade, and tourism, enhance connectivity with the Northeast, and bolster strategic preparedness, demonstrating India’s proactive approach to regional integration while countering geopolitical challenges posed by China.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/china-south-asia-india-railway-bhutan-jinping-modi-10293099/>

Editorial of the Day – 09.10.2025**Index****1. Infinite Boxes – On the 2025 Chemistry Nobel Prize****2. The Danger of An Unchecked Pre-Crime Framework****1. Infinite Boxes – On the 2025 Chemistry Nobel Prize**

GS PAPER-III Topic – Science and Technology– developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

The 2025 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to Richard Robson, Susumu Kitagawa, and Omar Yaghi for their work on Metal Organic Frameworks (MOFs).

About MOF

Structure – MOFs are three-dimensional (3D) crystalline structures in which metal ions serve as nodes and organic molecules as connectors.

Characteristics

Ultra High Porosity – MOFs form crystalline structures with a vast amount of empty space, creating numerous holes or pores. This high porosity allows them to absorb liquid and gas.

High Surface Area – Due to the millions of small pores, the internal surface area of MOFs is exceptionally high. This provides ample space for gas or liquid molecules to stick.

Key Contributions In the Evolution of MOF

Richard Robson– Foundation of MOF Design (1980s) – The concept of MOFs dates back to the 1980s when Richard Robson of the University of Melbourne established that molecular structures could be purposefully designed using coordination between metal ions and organic molecules.

Creation of Porous Structures – His experiment led to the formation of a diamond-like crystal filled with internal cavities, laying the foundation for future MOF research.

Limitation – Robson's structure was highly unstable, easily collapsing when subjected to water or heat. He established the foundation, which he called the Metal Organic Coordination Network.

Susumu Kitagawa – Development of Functional Frameworks (1997–1998)

Construction of 3D MOFs – In Japan, Susumu Kitagawa built three-dimensional frameworks using cobalt, nickel, or zinc ions connected by bipyridine molecules.

Gas Storage and Release – These frameworks remained stable even after being drained of water, allowing gases to be stored and released through their atomic gaps.

Concept of “Breathing” Solids – In 1998, Kitagawa proposed that MOFs could be made of soft solids capable of “breathing” as molecules moved in and out of their structure.

Omar Yaghi (Jordan) – Predictability and Industrial Reality – Yaghi sought to make MOF production predictable. He introduced the concept of Reticular Chemistry, where atomic and molecular units are intentionally designed and assembled like a building architect designs a structure. He used precise ratios of metals (like Zinc, Copper, Cobalt) and organic linkers (e.g., Benzene dicarboxylate) to build perfect 3D crystalline structures. Yaghi's team created a MOF in 1995 that was so stable it remained intact even when heated up to 350°C. This innovation shifted MOFs from mere curiosity to an industrial reality.

Real-World Applications of MOFs

Water Harvesting – MOFs can be designed to attract and absorb water molecules from humid air at night, releasing the water when heated by the sun during the day, thereby enabling water collection even in arid regions.

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Food Preservation – Special MOF containers can absorb Ethylene gas, which is released by ripening fruit and causes fruits to spoil quickly, thereby extending food freshness.

Pollution Control (Clean Water) – MOFs can be designed as “super sponges” to absorb harmful chemicals and pollutants dissolved in water.

Climate Change Mitigation – MOFs can be designed to filter factory smoke, selectively capturing and trapping Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) while allowing other gases to pass through.

Example – A MOF called CALF-20 can efficiently capture carbon dioxide from factory exhaust and is already being tested in industrial plants.

Challenges of MOFs

Durability in Real Conditions – There is a need to continuously improve the durability of MOFs so that they can withstand real-world environments such as humidity and temperature fluctuations.

Economic Scalability – Large-scale and cost-effective production of MOFs remains a major scientific and industrial challenge.

Integration into Devices – The use of MOFs in batteries and catalytic filters demands engineering precision comparable to their intricate chemical design.

Conclusion

Through their pioneering contributions, the laureates created not just room for molecules, but for imagination itself, reshaping the future of sustainable material science.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/infinite-boxes-on-the-2025-chemistry-nobel-prize/article70139732.ece>

2. The Danger of An Unchecked Pre-Crime Framework

GS PAPER-II Topic – Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Recent Supreme Court judgments have reignited debate on the constitutional and ethical legitimacy of Preventive detention

About Preventive Detention

Preventive Detention – Preventive detention allows the state to detain a person without trial or conviction to prevent them from committing a potential offence. It is an extraordinary power that limits personal liberty under exceptional circumstances.

Constitutional Provision – Articles 22(3)–(7) allow preventive detention laws that enable detention without trial in certain cases. A person ensnared in this Bermuda Triangle of Article 22 is effectively cut off from the Golden Triangle of Articles 14, 19, and 21, and is plunged into legal darkness.

Historical and Constitutional Background of Preventive Detention

Colonial Legacy – Preventive detention originated in the Bengal Regulations of 1818 and was retained under the Government of India Act, 1935 to maintain public order. Post-Independence, despite Britain restricting such measures to wartime, India adopted them permanently.

Early Judicial Validation – In A.K. Gopalan vs State of Madras (1950), the Supreme Court upheld the Preventive Detention Act, ruling that such detentions could be judged only under Article 22. This isolated preventive detention from Articles 14, 19, and 21 – creating a constitutional “Devil’s Island.”

Judicial Evolution

Maneka Gandhi vs Union of India (1978) – This landmark case expanded Article 21 by linking it with Articles 14 and 19, ensuring that “procedure established by law” must be fair, just, and reasonable.

A.K. Roy (1982) – The Court held that preventive detention laws cannot be challenged under Articles 14 or 19.

Continuing Executive Overreach – Preventive detention laws such as KAAPA (Kerala Anti-Social Activities Prevention Act) employ overly broad definitions like “goonda” or “rowdy,” giving sweeping powers to the state. Advisory boards meant to check misuse often act as mere formalities rather than effective safeguards.

Supreme Court’s Recent Observations

In *Dhanya M. vs State of Kerala* (2025), the Court stressed that preventive detention is an extraordinary power to be used sparingly and strictly per constitutional safeguards. It reiterated the distinction between “public order” and “law and order” and stated that detention cannot replace prosecution or bail.

In *S.K. Nazneen vs State of Telangana* (2023), the Court ruled that preventive detention cannot apply to mere law and order issues.

In *Rekha vs State of Tamil Nadu* (2011) and *Banka Sneha Sheela vs State of Telangana* (2021), the Supreme Court affirmed that preventive detention is an exception to Article 21 and must be tested against it.

Ethical Dilemmas Related To Preventive Detention

Pre-Crime Logic – The logic of preventive detention mirrors that of Minority Report (2002), where individuals are punished for crimes not yet committed. It undermines foundational legal principles – presumption of innocence, fair trial, and right to be heard.

Fallibility of Predictive Detention – The “subjective satisfaction” of the detaining authority is prone to error and misuse, especially against dissenters or political opponents. Weak procedural safeguards heighten the risk of arbitrary state action.

Way Forward

Restricting the Scope – Preventive detention should be confined to exceptional threats such as terrorism or transnational crimes, not used for routine law and order issues.

Strengthening Safeguards – Advisory boards must be independent and function as genuine checks, not rubber stamps. Regular judicial review should ensure compliance with Article 21 standards of fairness and reasonableness.

Re-examining Constitutional Validity – There is an urgent need to revisit the precedents set in *A.K. Gopalan* and *A.K. Roy* in light of modern constitutional jurisprudence. Preventive detention laws must be harmonised with the “Golden Triangle” of Articles 14, 19, and 21 to uphold liberty and justice.

Conclusion

Preventive detention, meant to safeguard public order, has become a tool of executive convenience. Without constitutional reform and judicial restraint, it will keep undermining the fundamental freedoms the Constitution upholds.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-danger-of-an-unchecked-pre-crime-framework/article70140459.ece>

Editorial of the Day – 10.10.2025

Index

1. On the Wildlife Protection (Kerala Amendment) Bill, 2025 – (TH)

2. Radical Centrism– (IE)

1. On the Wildlife Protection (Kerala Amendment) Bill, 2025 – (TH)

GS PAPER – III TOPIC – Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

The Wild Life Protection (Kerala Amendment) Bill 2025 seeks to arm the State with powers thus far reserved for the Union government. Kerala's decision to amend the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 marks a turning point in the federal discourse on environmental governance.

Background

WPA 1972 – The central act was created to curb the decline of wildlife. After the 2022 amendment, it contains four schedules, with Schedule 1 providing the highest protection.

Section 62 – This section empowers the Central Government to declare an animal as vermin if its numbers have increased excessively, or if it is causing significant damage to humans or crops (e.g., wild boars, rats). Declaring animal vermin allows citizens to kill it without penalty.

Kerala's Problem – The population of wild boars has significantly increased in Kerala, destroying crops, invading human settlements, and causing injuries.

The Kerala Amendment Bill 2025 – The Kerala Government repeatedly requested the Central Government to declare the wild boar as vermin but was ignored. Arguing that 'Wild Life' is on the Concurrent List, Kerala introduced its own legislation. Kerala argues that the state knows the ground realities and needs the decision-making power to act locally.

Main Provisions of the Bill

Power to Declare Vermin – It attempts to grant the State Government the power to declare animals listed in Schedule 2 of the WPA as vermin in a specific area and for a specific time. This power currently rests solely with the Centre under Section 62. Powers of the Chief Wildlife Warden – It proposes giving the Chief Wildlife Warden the power to kill, tranquilize, capture, or translocate any animal causing grave injury to a human.

Concerns Associated with the Bill

Centre's Rationale – The Central Government insists on retaining the power to declare vermin to maintain uniformity across the nation and achieve conservation goals, arguing that animals move between states. Legal Supremacy of Central Law on Concurrent Subjects – Although the subject is Concurrent, if state and central laws conflict, the law made by Parliament prevails. Since the Kerala Bill seeks to override the Central Act regarding vermin declaration, it requires the President's assent to become law.

Conclusion

Regardless of which level of government holds the power, there must be procedural transparency and proper data used as the basis for declaring animal vermin.

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/tusks-and-tensions-on-the-wild-life-protection-kerala-amendment-bill-2025/article70144084.ece>

2. Radical Centrism – (IE)

GS PAPER-II

TOPIC – Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

India's political discourse has increasingly been dominated by the ideological tug-of-war between the New Left and the Cultural Right. The idea of Radical Centrism seeks to offer politics that combines pluralism, equity, and national confidence within a constitutional framework.

About Radical Centrism

Radical centrism integrates the moral clarity of the Left with the cultural confidence of the Right, aiming to create a politics that embraces pluralism without erasing identity, promotes growth without abandoning equity, and seeks unity without enforcing uniformity. It harmonises the legacies of Nehru's secular inclusivity, Patel's pragmatic nationalism, Rajaji's economic liberalism, and Ambedkar's social justice, aspiring to build a principled, inclusive, and future-ready political vision.

Significance of Radical Centrism

Civic Nationalism – Radical centrism offers a new framework for Indian democracy grounded in constitutional pluralism and civic nationalism.

Dissent as Democratic Strength – It treats dissent as a sign of democratic health and upholds the Constitution as the supreme expression of Indian values.

Active Pluralism – It reaffirms India's unity in diversity, viewing pluralism not as passive tolerance but as active celebration of differences across caste, gender, religion, and region. It rejects both the homogenising tendencies of cultural nationalism and the fragmenting impulse of identity politics, advocating coalitions that transcend narrow vote banks. It places the marginalized — a Dalit woman or a tribal farmer — at the centre of the Indian narrative, affirming their role in shaping the national story.

Cooperative Governance – It embodies Atal Bihari Vajpayee's spirit of consensus, promoting dialogue over dogma and shared governance over zero-sum politics.

Reclaims Nationalism as Unifying Patriotism – Inspired by Sardar Patel's pragmatic nationalism, it calls for a patriotism that binds rather than blinds, fostering confidence without chauvinism.

Balances Economic Growth with Moral Purpose – Advocates market liberalisation tempered with investment in public goods like education, healthcare, and infrastructure, alongside targeted, efficient welfare and support for entrepreneurship.

Revives Consensus and Institutional Strength – Emphasises resilient institutions — judiciary, Election Commission, free press, and civil society — as safeguards for democracy, while promoting decentralisation and citizen engagement.

Anchors Social Justice as Core Ethic – Guided by Ambedkar's constitutional morality, it envisions justice as a foundational promise, ensuring representation, dignity, and equality through practical policy measures.

Challenges Associated With Radical Centrism

Ideological Polarisation – Deep-rooted ideological polarisation makes consensus politics difficult to sustain.

Economic Inequality and Populism – Economic inequalities and populist tendencies may distort the balance between markets and welfare.

Institutional Erosion and Centralisation – Institutional erosion and political centralisation hinder participatory governance.

Entrenched Political Interests – Resistance from entrenched political interests may obstruct efforts to transcend traditional vote-bank politics.

Shrinking Space for Nuanced Discourse – Public discourse often favours extremes, leaving limited space for nuanced narratives.

Way Forward

Constitutional Pluralism – Defend secularism, federalism, and minority rights while encouraging inter-cultural dialogue and respect.

Inclusive Economic Reform – Combine market-driven reforms with targeted investment in human capital and digital infrastructure to achieve equitable growth.

Civic Nationalism and Foreign Policy – Promote a shared Indian identity based on constitutional values, coupled with a robust defence and an assertive foreign policy.

Institutional Reforms and Citizen Voice – Strengthen democratic institutions, protect media freedom, and empower civil society as the people's voice between elections.

Conclusion

Radical centrism offers a principled, inclusive approach that transcends ideological extremes. Its focus is not on choosing sides but on choosing India's unity, diversity, and constitutional values.

Source - <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/shashi-tharoor-writes-india-is-too-complex-to-be-governed-by-ideological-rigidity-radical-centrism-offers-a-way-out-10295998/>

Editorial of the Day – 11.10.2025

Index

1. The Real Need is a Holistic Demographic Mission

2. Stop Blaming Farmers for Stubble Burning, Start Supporting Them

1. The Real Need Is A Holistic Demographic Mission

GS -II TOPIC - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

On August 15, 2025, a Demographic Mission was announced with an aim of monitoring undocumented immigration from Bangladesh and its demographic impact in India's border regions.

Background

Demographic Crossroads - India, now the world's most populous country, stands at a demographic crossroads.

Youth - Its large youth population is both a source of pride and a policy challenge.

Narrow Policy Focus - Despite its vast potential, demographic analysis in India has remained narrowly focused on population control, overlooking the evolving dimensions of fertility, mortality, migration, ageing, and human capability.

Need of the hour - A holistic approach to demography is essential for aligning population trends with national development goals.

Need for a Broader Demographic Vision

Understanding Demographic Transformation - A comprehensive demography mission must analyse the transformations that have occurred over the past two decades.

Beyond Fertility and Mortality - The mission should move beyond projecting population size or growth rates to focus on emerging qualitative aspects of population, such as education, health, and livelihood capabilities.

Focus on Human Capabilities - Demographic planning must recognise that population outcomes are shaped by human capability development — including access to quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunities — rather than mere population control measures.

Addressing Regional Inequities - From a human capability perspective, there is an urgent need to address the imbalanced infrastructure across regions that constrains equal opportunity.

Migration as a Central Demographic Concern

Migration as a Balancing Force - Migration acts as a population balancer across regions. Hence, policies should facilitate mobility and opportunity rather than restrict them.

Constitutional and Political Dimensions - Though the Constitution guarantees freedom of movement, migrants often face constructed identities and social exclusion. The state must safeguard migrant identity and ensure equality in access to rights and services.

The Home-Host Dilemma - Migrants face dual disenfranchisement—excluded from voting both in their native and host regions. A demographic mission must address this “crisis of belonging” to restore migrants’ political and social rights.

Longevity and Social Security Challenges in Demographic Mission

Redefining Ageing - Increasing life expectancy requires redefining economically productive years to ensure older citizens remain active and productive through health-oriented and flexible retirement policies.

Shared Responsibility for Security - Social security cannot remain the sole responsibility of the state. Employers should promote financial preparedness among workers for post-retirement years.

Planning for an Ageing Society - Policies must evolve to support an ageing population through reforms in pensions, healthcare, and workplace adaptability, ensuring continued productivity and dignity.

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Need for Mainstreaming Demography into Policy Frameworks

Demographic Sensitisation in Governance – Embedding population data and trends into planning ensures policies respond to actual needs.

Rethinking Indicators – Moving beyond per capita measures to more nuanced, demography-sensitive indicators enhances policy accuracy.

Inclusive Discourse – Encouraging awareness about population diversity fosters inclusive development and social harmony.

Way Forward

Demography as a Capability Mission – India's demographic mission must evolve into a human development mission, linking population data to education, employment, and empowerment.

Mainstreaming Demography into Policy Frameworks –

1. **Demographic Sensitisation in Governance** – Embedding population data and trends into planning ensures policies respond to actual needs.
2. **Rethinking Indicators** – Moving beyond per capita measures to more nuanced, demography-sensitive indicators enhances policy accuracy.
3. **Inclusive Discourse** – Encouraging awareness about population diversity fosters inclusive development and social harmony.

Global Perspective – Demographic planning should be contextualised globally, drawing lessons from other regions while leveraging India's unique youth advantage.

Conclusion

A holistic demographic mission must synchronise population trends with social equity and economic sustainability, ensuring that India's demographic diversity remains a strategic national asset.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-real-need-is-a-holistic-demographic-mission/article70149226.ece>

2. Stop Blaming Farmers For Stubble Burning, Start Supporting Them

GS-III TOPIC – Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Every winter, Delhi and North India experience severe air pollution due to smoke, turning cities into “gas chambers.” However, the farmers in Punjab and Haryana contribute only 30% to the smog; the remaining 70% comes from industries, construction dust, and vehicular emissions.

About Stubble Burning

The practice involves setting fire to leftover paddy stubble after harvest to quickly clear fields.

Reasons For Stubble Burning

Time Constraints – Fields must be cleared and wheat sown within seven days.

Cost and Speed – Burning is the cheapest and fastest method to handle around 20 million tonnes of stubble annually.

Soil Degradation – Intensive cropping cycles have depleted soil organic matter and lowered water tables, aggravating agricultural stress.

Existing Solutions To Tackle Stubble Burning

Technological Interventions

Happy Seeder & Super Seeder – Machines that sow wheat seeds without removing stubble.

Pusa Decomposer – ICAR-developed bio-liquid that converts stubble into compost in 25 days.

Government Support –

Funding – Over ₹1,000 crore allocated to Punjab; machinery subsidies of 50–80%.

Outcome – Stubble burning incidents fell 55% between 2016 and 2023 (NASA data).

Challenge – Many farmers distrust machinery or decomposers, fearing crop delays or losses.

Way Forward

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

Farmer-Led Demonstration – Conduct demonstration plots on progressive farmers' fields using Happy Seeders or Pusa Decomposer to build trust and encourage adoption.

Incentives/Bonus – Provide substantial per-acre bonuses to farmers who refrain from burning stubble, similar to European models, to motivate compliance through positive reinforcement.

Risk Coverage/Insurance – Offer 1–2 years of crop insurance or risk guarantees to reassure farmers that any loss from using new machinery or decomposers will be compensated.

Farmer-to-Farmer Training – Engage experienced farmers as trainers, leveraging their practical knowledge and credibility to educate peers more effectively than official instructors.

Access to Machinery – Establish cooperative machinery banks so farmers can rent expensive equipment affordably, addressing the limitations of subsidies and ensuring widespread access.

Adopt Regenerative Farming – Focus on restoring soil health for sustainable agriculture.

Conclusion

The narrative must change – farmers should be seen as 'part of the solution,' not the problem. By transforming stubble from waste into a valuable resource, India can simultaneously protect the environment and enhance agricultural productivity.

Source - <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/premium/stop-blaming-farmers-for-stubble-burning-start-supporting-them/>



Editorial of the Day – 13.10.2025

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1. Great Nicobar revives the Issue of Nature's Legal Rights – (TH)

2. India – Afghanistan Relations – (IE)

1. Great Nicobar revives the Issue of Nature's Legal Rights – (TH)

GS III

TOPIC – Infrastructure – Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc

Great Nicobar – Strategic Development vs Environmental Conservation

India's ambitious development plan for Great Nicobar Island includes the construction of a power plant, township, transshipment port, and airport, part of a broader effort to boost India's strategic and economic presence in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. While the plan promises enhanced connectivity, trade, and energy infrastructure, it comes with significant ecological and social costs. The project threatens 13,000 hectares of pristine forest, raising critical concerns about biodiversity loss, tribal rights, and environmental sustainability. This scenario illustrates the persistent tension between strategic infrastructure development and environmental protection in ecologically sensitive regions.

Ecological Significance of Great Nicobar

Global Biodiversity Hotspot – The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, including Great Nicobar, are internationally recognized as a biodiversity hotspot, harboring endemic flora and fauna, and acting as a carbon sink and climate regulator. This makes the islands vital for ecological stability both regionally and globally.

Fragile Ecosystem – The island's ecosystem is highly sensitive to anthropogenic interventions. Past development projects, often driven by mainland priorities, have neglected island-specific ecological dynamics, resulting in habitat degradation, loss of endemic species, and disruption of natural processes.

Threats from Mega-Projects – Projects like the proposed power plant, township, port, and airport involve large-scale deforestation, soil disruption, and potential alteration of coastal and marine ecosystems. This threatens endemic species, migratory pathways, and coral reef health, while increasing carbon emissions and environmental vulnerability.

Tribal Rights and Legal Precedent

Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 Compliance – Any diversion of forest land requires certification from the Tribal Council or Gram Sabha to ensure tribal consent. FRA aims to protect tribal autonomy, livelihoods, and cultural practices.

Lessons from Niyamgiri Hills (2013) – The Supreme Court judgment recognized the right of Gram Sabhas to reject mining and development projects affecting tribal lands, setting a legal precedent for community-led decision-making.

Concerns in Nicobar – Reports indicate that the Tribal Council may not have been consulted prior to forest diversion approval for the Great Nicobar project, raising serious legal and ethical questions regarding adherence to FRA provisions and protection of tribal rights.

Rights of Nature – A Global Perspective

Legal Personhood for Nature – Several countries, including Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and New Zealand, have recognized rivers, forests, and ecosystems as legal entities with rights. This allows appointed guardians to act in defense of ecological integrity.

Case Study – Atrato River, Colombia (2016) – The Atrato River was granted legal personhood, and a guardianship commission including indigenous representatives was established to protect both ecological and cultural interests.

Indian Innovation – Ganga and Yamuna (2017) – The Uttarakhand High Court granted legal personhood to Ganga and Yamuna rivers, with designated guardians to enforce protection and restoration measures.

Significance of Legal Personhood for Ecosystems

Ecological Safeguard – Assigning legal personhood enables ecosystems to have a voice in judicial and administrative processes, providing mechanisms for their protection, restoration, and sustainable management.

Integration with FRA – Legal personhood complements tribal autonomy by aligning ecological protection with community-led stewardship, ensuring that development projects do not compromise critical habitats.

Guardianship Mechanism – Designated bodies can legally represent forests and ecosystems, sue violators, and ensure adherence to sustainable practices, safeguarding bio-cultural heritage.

Way Forward

FRA Enforcement – Strict adherence to tribal consent and active participation in forest management decisions is essential. Projects must prioritize tribal voices in planning and implementation.

Implement Guardianship Models – Inspired by the Uttarakhand river cases and Atrato River model, **nature guardians** can be appointed to oversee ecological protection and restoration in Great Nicobar.

Robust Impact Assessment – Conduct comprehensive environmental, biodiversity, and seismic risk assessments to evaluate the feasibility of large-scale projects without undermining ecological and social integrity.

Legal and Institutional Clarity – Define the rights, responsibilities, and enforcement mechanisms for natural entities to balance strategic development with ecological sustainability.

Conclusion

Great Nicobar stands at the crossroads of strategic development, tribal rights, and ecological conservation. Leveraging the principles of tribal autonomy under the FRA and rights of nature, India has the opportunity to demonstrate sustainable and inclusive development. Thoughtful planning that integrates legal safeguards, community participation, and ecosystem guardianship can ensure that strategic projects are realized without compromising the fragile ecological and cultural heritage of the islands.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/great-nicobar-revives-the-issue-of-natures-legal-rights/article70155867.ece>

2. India – Afghanistan Relations – (IE)

GS-II TOPIC – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Afghanistan FM Amir Khan Muttaqi's visit provides an opportunity to deepen bilateral ties, as India pursues pragmatic engagement with the Taliban, balancing strategic, humanitarian, and development priorities amid a New Great Game involving US, China, Russia, and Pakistan.

India's Pragmatic Engagement in Afghanistan Amid Complex Regional Dynamics

Historically, Afghanistan has been the "graveyard of empires", cautioning India against over-ambitious engagement or unrealistic expectations.

India's Pragmatic Approach – Avoids over-enthusiasm reminiscent of the late Afghan republic era. Engages through functional cooperation rather than formal recognition of the Taliban.

Regional Dynamics

US – Assigns Pakistan a significant role in Afghanistan and the western neighbourhood.

China – Expanding influence in Pakistan, Iran, and the Arabian Peninsula, pursuing BRI-linked projects.

Russia – Recognizes the Taliban and maintains strong Iran ties.

Pakistan – Remains an implacable adversary of India, historically supporting Taliban factions.

Diplomatic Engagement

High-Level Meeting – India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Muttaqi on 10 October 2025 to discuss bilateral cooperation.

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Embassy Reopening – India will re-establish its mission in Kabul, initially headed by a chargé d'affaires. This approach signals functional engagement without diplomatic recognition, maintaining alignment with international consensus.

Taliban Autonomy – Afghanistan retains sovereign control over its security and foreign policy, which India respects. Embassy operations (flag, staff) in Delhi do not imply formal recognition.

Human Rights Sensitivity – Jaishankar avoided commentary on Taliban human rights policies, focusing on practical cooperation. Past India-US 2+2 statements urged Taliban to respect human rights, but India pragmatically prioritizes engagement over confrontation.

Security and Strategic Cooperation

Cross-Border Terrorism – India and Taliban share concerns over Pakistan-backed groups like TTP.

Regional Irony – Pakistan, Taliban's past patron, cannot dictate India policy.

China and Pakistan – Likely wary of India-Taliban security cooperation due to geopolitical stakes. Development and Humanitarian Cooperation

Areas of Cooperation – Food, healthcare, education, training, and completion of stalled infrastructure projects.

Visa Liberalisation – Taliban requests easier access for students and patients; India can allow under security protocols.

Economic Engagement – Taliban seeks Indian involvement in mining and other sectors, balancing Chinese influence.

Strategic Imperatives for India

Firm Presence – Necessary to manage great power competition in the western neighbourhood.

Preventing Chinese Dominance – Ensures Afghanistan does not become economically integrated with Western China.

Managing Pakistan Threats – Engagement helps mitigate Pakistan's strategic encirclement and maintains regional stability.

Way Forward

Sustained Engagement – Continue humanitarian, educational, and development cooperation.

Security Coordination – Collaborate cautiously on counterterrorism.

Economic Leverage – Expand Indian investment in infrastructure, mining, and other sectors.

Visa and People-to-People Links – Facilitate students, patients, and skilled workers within secure protocols.

Pragmatic Diplomacy – Functional engagement without formal Taliban recognition, respecting international consensus.

Conclusion

India's principled pragmatism balances development, humanitarian aid, and strategic interests. Engagement with the Taliban aims to safeguard regional interests, support Afghan people, and ensure South Asian stability, while navigating great power competition and limiting external influence.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/india-approach-taliban-recognition-afghanistan-muttaqi-10305973/>

Editorial of the Day – 14.10.2025

Index

1. The RTI is Dead, Long Live the RTI-(IE)

2. Rebuilding Trust in Public Service Recruitment Exams Need a Tech Overhaul(IE)

1. The RTI is Dead, Long Live the RTI(IE)

GS II TOPIC – Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures

Marking 20 years of the RTI Act (2005), a landmark in India's citizen-led transparency movement, its spirit now faces challenges from the DPDPA 2023, which risks diluting public access to information and weakening government accountability.

Historical Background of RTI

Grassroots Struggle – The RTI Act, 2005, was the result of a prolonged movement led by social activists like Aruna Roy and Nikhil De.

Origin in Mewar – The movement began in Mewar, Rajasthan, known as the "RTI City."

People's Demand – The Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) campaigned under the slogan "Our Money, Our Account" (Humara Paisa, Humara Hisab).

Impact of RTI – The Act empowered citizens to expose corruption, address government delays, and hold officials accountable.

Commemoration – A memorial/museum is being constructed in Mewar to honor this struggle and educate future generations.

Threats from Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA) 2023

Official Aim vs. Effect – While the DPDPA claims to protect personal data, it is argued to undermine the RTI Act, metaphorically creating a "hole" in the RTI "pot," causing crucial information to leak away.

Mechanisms Weakening RTI

Restricting Personal Information Disclosure

RTI Act (Section 8(1)) – Personal information could be withheld only if unrelated to public activity or interest. Names of officials in public tenders could be disclosed.

DPDPA (Section 44(3)) – Personal information cannot be disclosed regardless of public interest.

Impact – Public Information Officers (PIOs) can refuse to provide names of officials, making accountability impossible.

Removal of Citizen Equality Clause

Original Provision – Citizens had the same right to information as Parliament or State Assemblies.

DPDPA Amendment – However, the amendment allows the government to restrict information to elected representatives, lowering the status of ordinary citizens.

Chilling Effect through Severe Penalties

Fines Imposed – Up to ₹250 crore for revealing personal information without permission.

Impact – Creates fear among journalists and activists, discouraging exposure of corrupt officials.

Implications

Hindrance to Accountability – Weakening RTI impedes citizens' ability to expose corruption despite past successes like the Adarsh Housing Society Scam and Commonwealth Games Scam.

Lack of Consultation – Amendments were made without public or opposition consultation, undermining democratic principles.

Way Forward

Restore Public Interest Override – Reinstate the clause allowing disclosure of personal information when larger public interest—such as corruption or misuse of power—is involved.

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

Balanced Data Framework – Harmonise the DPDPA and RTI Act through clear rules ensuring that privacy protection does not override transparency in governance.

Empower Information Commissions – Strengthen the Central and State Information Commissions with greater autonomy, staffing, and digital infrastructure for faster grievance redressal.

Promote Digital RTI Portals – Expand RTI Online and integrate real-time tracking, feedback, and data analytics to enhance accessibility and reduce bureaucratic delays.

Civic Awareness – Renew public education on citizens' right to information, linking it with good governance and anti-corruption movements.

Conclusion

Despite the RTI's dilution, the citizens' demand for transparency endures. As the Supreme Court held in *State of UP vs Raj Narain* (1975), governance must maintain "but few secrets." Balancing privacy and accountability is key to preserving democratic integrity.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-rti-is-dead-long-live-the-rti-10305257/>

2. Rebuilding Trust in Public Service Recruitment Exams Need a Tech Overhaul(IE)

GS II **TOPIC** – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

A robust and transparent recruitment system is not merely a necessity but a fundamental right of every citizen aspiring to serve their nation.

Background

Erosion of Institutional Trust – Trust is the bedrock of any society's functioning, and the true wealth of a nation lies in its citizens' faith in institutions that govern them.

Purpose of Public Service Commissions (PSCs) – Public Service Commissions (PSCs) at both central and state levels were created to ensure fairness, meritocracy, and social justice in government recruitment.

Challenges to PSC Integrity – However, the integrity of this trust has been severely tested in recent years, especially across state-level commissions, due to repeated recruitment scams, malpractices, corruption, paper leaks, and manipulation.

Examples of System Failures

UPSC – Cases like Pooja Khedkar (who allegedly bypassed the system using fraudulent disability and OBC certificates) highlight flaws.

Bihar Police Exam 2023 – Issues included paper leaks and the use of proxies.

Punjab PPSC 2021 – Exposed a systemic failure where insiders leaked papers for bribes.

Uttar Pradesh (RO ARO & Police Constable) – Mass protest and government pressure led to the cancellation of exams due to paper leaks.

West Bengal SSC – A national news scandal involving high-ranking officials and politicians.

Implications of the Crisis

Aspirational Importance of Government Jobs – For millions of young Indians, government jobs provide the most reliable route to economic stability and upward social mobility.

Hope for the Underprivileged – PSCs are seen as beacons of opportunity for talented and less privileged aspirants who rely on a fair system to advance.

Impact on Youth and Society – Scandals have ruined the careers of deserving candidates and triggered widespread frustration and public protests.

Threat to Governance Credibility – The loss of confidence in recruitment processes undermines trust in state institutions and weakens the moral foundation of governance.

National Imperative – Restoring credibility and fairness in recruitment is vital for India's prosperity, social harmony, and democratic stability.

Reasons for the Crisis

Politicisation of Appointments – Positions in commissions are often filled based on political loyalty rather than merit or competence.

Opacity in Recruitment Processes – Exam design, evaluation, and result publication lack transparency, encouraging manipulation and corruption.

Absence of Accountability – Members found guilty of malpractice often escape scrutiny due to inadequate internal monitoring systems.

Technological Deficiencies – Reliance on outdated, paper-based processes makes it easier for proxies, impersonation, and leaks to occur.

Weak Legal Enforcement – Slow judicial processes and lenient penalties fail to deter exam-related fraud and misconduct.

Way Forward

Institutional Reforms

Transparent Appointments – A Collegium System should be established for appointing PSC members, similar to judicial appointments. This collegium should include the CM, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of the High Court.

Accountability and Merit – A review panel should monitor Commission decisions and fix responsibility for leaks. Selection for conducting exams must be merit-based, ensuring experts with professional qualifications and clean track records are chosen.

Increased Transparency – There must be transparency in the evaluation parameters for mains answers and the basis for interview marks. Performance statistics should be released. The answer keys should be published promptly, allowing candidates to check their results.

Technology-Led Solutions

Biometric Identification – Use Aadhaar-based fingerprint and iris scanning to prevent proxy candidates.

Encrypted Delivery – Design special printers for exam centres that print the paper only shortly before the exam using a password. This eliminates the risk associated with physically transporting paper.

AI Monitoring – Use AI in online exams to track candidate eye movements and record conversations to detect fraudulent activity in real-time.

Legal Framework

Central Legislation – The Public Examination Act 2024 (passed by Parliament, applicable to UPSC, SSC, Railways, Banking) provides for 10 years of imprisonment and up to a ₹1 crore fine for organized paper leaks.

State Laws – States should implement strict laws like Uttarakhand's Anti-Copping Law 2023, which mandates life imprisonment and up to ₹10 crore fine for copying mafia, including property confiscation.

Fast Track Courts – Special courts are needed to ensure justice is swift, aiming for case resolution within six months to a year.

Administrative Oversight – A National Regulatory Body could be established (or the duty given to the UPSC) to audit recruitment processes and set standards for all State PSCs.

Civil Society Role – Watchdog organizations and citizen groups must provide oversight to ensure accountability and place pressure on the commissions.

Conclusion

Restoring integrity in recruitment is essential to rebuild public trust and uphold citizens' right to fair opportunity. Institutional reform, ethical leadership, and participatory oversight can renew faith in a merit-based system vital for national progress.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/rebuilding-trust-in-public-service-recruitment-exams-needs-a-tech-led-overhaul-10303200/>

Editorial of the Day – 15.10.2025

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1. The Need to Address Caste-Based Atrocities – (TH)

GS2/Social Issues

Caste-based atrocities, from rural villages to urban institutions, discrimination and violence against SCs and STs, continue to plague India's social fabric, despite constitutional guarantees of equality and justice.

About the Caste-based Atrocities

Atrocity refers to any offense listed under Section 3 of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, committed by a person who is not a member of a Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST), against someone who is. These offenses include –

1. **Social exclusion** (e.g., denying access to public spaces)
2. **Physical violence** (e.g., assault, rape, murder)
3. **Economic exploitation** (e.g., land grabbing, bonded labor)
4. **Humiliation and verbal abuse** based on caste identity

The Act was enacted to prevent such offenses, ensure justice and dignity for SC/ST communities, and provide relief and rehabilitation to victims.

Recent Trend (NCRB 2023 Report)

Crimes Against Scheduled Castes (SCs) – A total of 57,789 cases were registered in 2023, marking a 0.4% increase over 2022. Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number with 15,130 cases, followed by Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The crime rate against SCs stood at 28.7 per lakh population.

Crimes Against Scheduled Tribes (STs) – A total of 12,960 cases were registered, reflecting a sharp 28.8% increase from the previous year. It is partly attributed to the ethnic violence in Manipur, where cases against STs rose from just 1 in 2022 to 3,399 in 2023.

Regional Disparities – High-incidence states for SC atrocities include –

1. Madhya Pradesh (72.6 per lakh);
2. Rajasthan (69.1 per lakh);
3. Bihar (42.6 per lakh);

Reasons Behind Caste-Based Atrocities in India

Historical and Structural Inequality – Untouchability and social exclusion has created vertical inequalities that persist even after legal abolition under Article 17 of the Constitution.

Absence of Caste Sensitivity in Institutions – Caste bias is deeply embedded in classrooms and family structures. Justice K Chandru Report recommended dropping caste-based names from schools and merging institutions to reduce segregation.

Institutional Apathy and Underreporting – MHA acknowledges that delays in investigation, lack of police sensitivity, and underrepresentation of SC/ST personnel contribute to poor enforcement of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Economic and Social Exclusion – Caste-based discrimination often manifests in denial of access to education, employment, and public services. It fuels resentment and perpetuates cycles of poverty and vulnerability.

Legal and Institutional Gaps

Underreporting and Low Conviction Rates – West Bengal reported only 102 cases (NCRB 2023), with a crime rate of 0.5 per lakh, raising questions about underreporting or systemic gaps in registration. Only about 60% of SC-related cases led to charge sheets, while about 15% were closed due to lack of evidence or false claims.

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Inadequate Implementation of Laws – NCST highlights that many states fail to establish Special Courts for speedy trials; appoint nodal officers to monitor implementation; provide timely relief and rehabilitation to victims; The Department of Social Justice notes that despite constitutional mandates, enforcement of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, remains inconsistent across states.

Judicial and Policing Bias – The Supreme Court struck down caste-based segregation in prison labor, calling it unconstitutional and a violation of human dignity. Moreover, a Parliamentary Standing Committee flagged lapses in state-level enforcement, urging the central government to push for stronger compliance with the PoA Act.

Constitutional Safeguards

Article 15 – It prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth;

Article 17 – It abolishes untouchability and forbids its practice in any form;

Article 46 – It directs the State to promote educational and economic interests of SCs/STs;

Article 338 & 338A – It establishes the National Commissions for SCs and STs to monitor safeguards;

Contributions of Social Reformers

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – Drafting constitutional provisions like Article 17, which abolished untouchability;

1. Leading mass movements for temple entry and access to public resources;
2. Converting to Buddhism in 1956 as a form of protest and spiritual liberation for Dalits;

Periyar E.V. Ramasamy – He was founder of the Self-Respect Movement, a fierce critic of Brahminical dominance and religious orthodoxy. His contributions include –

1. Advocating for inter-caste marriages and women's rights;
2. Promoting atheism and rational thought to dismantle caste-based rituals;
3. Inspiring generations of anti-caste activists in Tamil Nadu;

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule

1. Opening the first school for girls in Pune in 1848;
2. Campaigning against untouchability, child marriage, and caste-based exclusion;
3. Promoting the idea of 'Bahujan upliftment' through knowledge and self-respect;

Vaikom Satyagraha – It was a non-violent protest in Kerala (1924–25) demanding temple entry rights for lower castes. Leaders like TK Madhavan and K Kelappan, supported by Mahatma Gandhi, played pivotal roles in it.

Legal Safeguards

The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 – It penalizes the enforcement of untouchability; and prohibits denial of access to public spaces and services.

The SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 – It defines specific offenses as 'atrocities' (e.g., assault, humiliation, social boycott); It bars anticipatory bail for accused persons under Section 18, and mandates Special Courts for speedy trials; It provides for victim compensation and rehabilitation;

The SC/ST (PoA) Amendment Act, 2015 – It expands the list of punishable offenses; and strengthens witness protection and procedural safeguards.

National Helpdesk for Prevention of Atrocities – It has resolved over 634,000 grievances, offering legal aid and tracking complaints. Meanwhile, the Open Government Data Platform provides granular data on crimes against SCs, aiding transparency and research.

Judicial Interpretation

2025 – The Supreme Court upheld the bar on anticipatory bail for caste crime accused, warning against 'mini-trials' at the bail stage;

2024 – The Court declared caste-based segregation in prison labor unconstitutional, directing states to revise prison manuals within three months. These judgments affirm that caste-based discrimination violates fundamental rights to dignity and equality.

Institutional Mechanisms – Institutions like the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and the Ministry of Social Justice are tasked with –

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1. Monitoring implementation of safeguards;
2. Investigating complaints;
3. Advising on policy reforms;

Way Forward

Strengthen Law Enforcement – Ensure swift investigation, prosecution, and sensitisation of police and judiciary on caste bias.

Promote Egalitarian Values – Launch nationwide educational and media campaigns to dismantle caste-based prejudices.

Revitalise Civil Society – Encourage religious institutions, academia, and NGOs to foster inter-caste dialogue and solidarity.

Ensure Affirmative Action – Enforce reservations transparently, ensuring equitable access to education, employment, and resources.

Amplify Marginalised Voices – Empower Dalit, Adivasi, and Bahujan leaders to drive the social justice agenda.

Judicial Reforms – Fast-track courts for atrocity cases should be expanded to all districts.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-need-to-address-caste-based-atrocities/article70159373.ece>

2. Nobel Prize for Economics 2025 – (IE)

GS III TOPIC – Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

The Nobel prize for economics 2025 was awarded to Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt for having explained innovation-driven economic growth.

Key Lessons from Nobel-Winning Research

Joel Moky – Sustained Growth needs useful knowledge and openness to change.

Aghion & Howitt – Creative Destruction at the firm level generates stable national income.

Joel Mokyr's Contribution

Historical Puzzle of Stagnation – Joel Mokyr explored why economic growth was nearly zero for 1,800 years before 1800 and concluded that the transformation occurred when two kinds of knowledge were unified.

Prescriptive Knowledge – The “How” of Craft and Practice – Prescriptive Knowledge refers to practical, experience-based learning gained through trial and error or passed from masters to apprentices.

Focus – How things work (e.g., a carpenter knowing how to cut wood).

Period – Predominant before 1800, but limited in driving large-scale progress.

Propositional Knowledge – The “Why” of Science – Propositional Knowledge represents scientific understanding developed through experimentation and pursuit of truth.

Focus – Why things work (e.g., understanding why nitrogen enriches soil or why carbon affects steel strength).

Period – Emerged during Europe's Enlightenment era (16th–17th centuries).

Synthesis into Useful Knowledge – The Catalyst of Modern Growth – The combination of How (Prescriptive) and Why (Propositional) knowledge created Useful Knowledge, which catalyzed new innovations and triggered rapid economic growth after 1800.

Aghion & Howitt's Framework of Creative Destruction

The Paradox of Stability and Turbulence – Aghion and Howitt analyzed the paradox where the macro-economy remains stable—with steady growth and inflation—while the micro-economy experiences constant churn, as companies fail, emerge, and workers shift jobs.

Firm-Level Innovation and Temporary Monopoly – They showed that companies strive for temporary monopolies through innovation, leading to firm-level upheaval that sustains long-term national growth—a process termed Creative Destruction.

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Economic Cycle of Growth and Innovation – Their model linked key economic variables into a self-reinforcing cycle –

R&D Funding – Companies need funds for research and innovation.

Savings – R&D is financed through people's savings.

Interest Rate – The level of savings depends on the prevailing interest rate.

Growth Rate – The economy's growth rate influences interest rates.

Feedback Loop – The growth rate then affects the scale of future R&D investment.

Relevance of Nobel Laureates' Work to Current Policy Debates

Government Support for Innovation – A key debate is whether governments should subsidise R&D in companies. While such support can boost innovation, it also risks benefiting individual firms more than society or future innovators.

Social Welfare and Openness to Change – An alternative view stresses social welfare subsidies to build safety nets that keep societies open to change despite disruptions like job losses from new technologies.

Balancing Growth and Stability – The Nobelists' insight highlights the need for both innovation incentives and social protection to achieve sustained, inclusive growth. There is a need to balance innovation with social safety nets—they are complementary.

Conclusion

The 2025 Nobel Prize highlights that sustained economic growth stems from Useful Knowledge and Creative Destruction, emphasizing the need to balance innovation incentives with social protection to ensure resilient, inclusive, and long-term economic development.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-economics/nobel-prize-economic-sciences-winners-10304713/>



Editorial of the Day – 16.10.2025**Index****1. Navigating the global economic transformation – (TH)****2. The world after the American order – (IE)****1. Navigating the global economic transformation****General Studies 2 – International Relations****Topic –** Reforming Global Economic Order, South–

South Cooperation, Digital Sovereignty, and Inclusive Growth

India and the Global South – Building a Fair Global Economic System**Context and Introduction**

The global economic order is rapidly shifting amid a U.S.–China power struggle. Both powers are forming exclusive economic blocs to protect national interests. These changes are redrawing trade routes, currency systems, and strategic priorities. Within this disruption lies an opportunity for India and the Global South to create a just and balanced world order beyond neoliberal globalization.

Analysing New Economic Paradigms**State–Capital Nexus**

1. Populist leaders increasingly align with large corporations for mutual gain.
2. This results in selective state control benefiting a few elites at public expense.
3. Public wealth is traded for private political and economic power.
4. The social contract between citizens and the state weakens, leading to inequality and mistrust.

Comparison Table

System Type	Role of Government	Main Beneficiaries	Impact
Laissez-faire capitalism	Limited state control	Public and small firms	Fair competition
Populist–autocratic capitalism	Heavy, selective control	Crony capitalists	Rising inequality, corruption

Resurgence of Power Politics

1. Economic policies are increasingly shaped by geopolitical calculations.
2. Crony capitalists influence national strategies to revive old-style power blocs.
3. The United States seeks to maintain dominance through global strategic control.
4. Its moves combine technology, finance, and resource access with foreign policy objectives.

Examples of U.S. Strategy

Strategy	Target Region	Purpose
Chip relocation	Taiwan–U.S.	Secure semiconductor supply
Route control	Panama	Protect key trade routes
Resource linkage	Africa, Central Asia	Access rare minerals
Arctic expansion	Greenland, Canada	Secure energy and ecological frontiers

Outcome – Creation of rival zones of influence, leading to new global tensions.

Digital Colonialism

1. Big Tech corporations dominate global data, finance, and communication systems.
2. They shape national policies and even influence democratic outcomes.
3. Over 100 central banks are testing CBDCs, potentially reducing monetary sovereignty.
4. AI governance and data regulation are tilted toward corporate interests over citizen rights.

Key Trends and Concerns

Trend	Example	Concern
AI and data laws	AI Action Plan, Cloud Act	Privacy threats
Financial systems	SWIFT, CBDCs	Weakening of national control
Digital monopolies	Big Tech dominance	Decline of fair competition

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Result – Faster digital growth but less economic freedom, reduced transparency, and wider inequality.

Opportunity in Crisis

Lessons from Global Disruptions

1. Economic crises create openings for emerging economies like India and China.
2. The old neoliberal globalisation model prioritised profits, cheap labour, and exploitation of resources.
3. It led to high debt levels, weak welfare, and rising inequality.
4. A fairer system must focus on sustainability, equity, and balanced development.

Old Model Features	Effects
Profit-driven growth	Inequality and debt crises
Resource exploitation	Environmental degradation
Weak welfare	Social and economic imbalance

Deepening Inequality

1. According to the World Bank (2022) –
 - Nearly 47% of the global population lives below the \$6.85/day poverty line.
 - Around 735 million people face chronic hunger.
2. These realities widen the North–South divide and fuel populist politics.
3. Social frustration leads to erosion of democratic trust and increased instability.

Indicator	Data (2022)	Concern
Global poverty	47% of population	Economic exclusion
Hunger	735 million people	Rising social instability
Social impact	Decline in trust	Populism and unrest

Building a Fairer Economic Order

1. India and the Global South must reject unfair economic hierarchies.
2. They should collaborate on a New Economic Deal emphasizing justice and cooperation.
3. Key priorities –
 1. Reforming global financial institutions (IMF, World Bank) for fair representation.
 2. Creating a debt-relief framework for developing nations.
 3. Enhancing South–South partnerships through BRICS and regional blocs.
 4. Promoting bipartisan diplomacy for durable international relationships.

Strategy	Objective	Example
Financial reform	Ensure fair global representation	IMF, World Bank reform
Debt-relief mechanism	End structural debt dependency	Global South coordination
South–South cooperation	Balanced trade and mutual growth	BRICS initiatives
Bipartisan diplomacy	Build long-term trust	Broader ties with U.S., Bangladesh, Nepal

Need for a Recalibration

Rethinking India's Growth Path

India must pursue state-led development alongside private enterprise. The state's leadership is crucial in areas affecting sovereignty, equity, and strategic interests.

Sector	State's Role	Purpose
Energy & Infrastructure	Build and regulate	Ensure stability and inclusive growth
Health & Education	Fund and expand	Universal welfare and human capital
Defence & Space	Lead and innovate	Strengthen strategic autonomy
Digital Finance & Data	Govern and protect	Preserve sovereignty and citizen rights

Preventing Corporate Dominance

1. Enforce anti-monopoly laws to prevent excessive corporate concentration.
2. Establish a sovereign wealth fund (like Norway's) to manage national savings responsibly.
3. Redirect and modernise Public Sector Units (PSUs) to function like China's state-owned enterprises for strategic influence.

Reform	Global Example	Benefit
Anti-monopoly laws	EU, U.S.	Promote fair competition
Sovereign wealth fund	Norway	Invests profits for social good
PSU redeployment	China	Strengthens global and economic presence

Investing in Knowledge and Digital Sovereignty

1. Deep investment in science, research, and education is vital for innovation.
2. Academic freedom must be preserved to drive creativity and discovery.
3. The digital-financial framework should align with constitutional values of justice, equality, and transparency.

Focus Area	Goal	Impact
Scientific research	Foster innovation	Enhance global competitiveness
Education autonomy	Encourage creativity	Build skilled, informed citizens
Digital finance	Reflect constitutional principles	Achieve secure, inclusive growth

Conclusion

India stands at a pivotal moment in the global economic transition. The way forward requires blending state-led strategic vision with inclusive, ethical growth.

By –

1. Reforming global financial systems,
2. Promoting equitable South-South cooperation, and
3. Strengthening its knowledge and digital base,

India can help the Global South construct a resilient, just, and multipolar economic order. The ultimate goal – a fair, transparent, and prosperity-driven world system rooted in shared justice and cooperation.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/navigating-the-global-economic-transformation/article70168195.ece>

2. The World after the American order

General Studies 2 – International Relations

Topic – Changing Global Order and India's Foreign

Policy Strategy

Context

The post-World War II global order, led by the United States, is weakening. This system was based on liberal democracy, multilateralism, and economic openness. America's inward turn—especially during the Trump administration—has accelerated its decline. China is now attempting to reshape global norms and institutions around its own values and interests.

Introduction – Decline of Pax Americana

After World War II, the *Pax Americana* system promoted peace, democracy, and open markets. It was institutionalized through the UN, IMF, World Bank, and later the WTO. The US served as the guarantor of stability and global economic order. However, multiple challenges have eroded this dominance –

1. *Prolonged wars* (Iraq, Afghanistan) drained legitimacy.
2. *2008 financial crisis* damaged economic credibility.
3. *Nationalism and protectionism* rose globally.
4. *Domestic polarization* in the US weakened its global engagement.

The very principles that upheld the liberal order—free trade and multilateralism—are now being questioned by the US itself.

Changing Contours of Global Power

1. The Unraveling of the US-led Order

The US is withdrawing from its traditional global leadership role. Under Trump, the policy shifted from internationalism to isolationism.

Key moves –

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1. Withdrawal from the *Paris Climate Agreement* and *Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA)*.
2. Tariff wars with China and the EU.
3. Criticism of NATO and UN institutions.

Result – weakened transatlantic alliances, uncertain global leadership, and greater instability. US retreat allowed competitors like China and Russia to expand influence in strategic regions.

2. China's Assertive Expansion

China promotes an alternative model – *state-led capitalism + authoritarian governance*.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – connects over 140 countries through infrastructure, loans, and trade. Presents itself as a champion of *South-South cooperation* and “win-win development.”

Criticisms and concerns –

1. *Debt diplomacy* in Sri Lanka, Zambia, and others.
2. *Opaque financing* and strategic encirclement (“String of Pearls”).
3. *Aggression* in South China Sea and Indo-Pacific.

Through digital, financial, and technological initiatives, China seeks to reshape global governance in its favor.

3. A Multipolar and Pragmatic Global Order

Neither the US nor China can unilaterally dominate the world anymore. Rise of *middle powers* and *regional actors*—India, Japan, EU, ASEAN, Brazil, South Africa. Multipolarity implies diffusion of power across regions and issues. Global governance is becoming *issue-based* rather than *ideological* – Countries cooperate on climate, energy, and health without full political alignment. Platforms like *G20*, *BRICS*, *SCO*, and *ASEAN* reflect this plural and pragmatic approach.

Global South nations seek voice, equality, and reform in international institutions (UNSC, IMF, WTO).

Implications for India

India stands as a democratic power with both economic and strategic weight. Plays a *bridging role* between developed democracies and emerging economies.

Strategic participation in multiple forums –

QUAD – for Indo-Pacific security and technology collaboration.

BRICS – for reforming global institutions and promoting South-South cooperation.

Challenges for India –

1. Balancing ties with the US and Russia amid China's assertiveness.
2. Maintaining *strategic autonomy* in a polarized world.
3. Building economic resilience and technological capacity to project influence.

India's policy priorities –

1. Strengthen multilateralism and reform UN and Bretton Woods systems.
2. Promote inclusive development and rule-based global order.
3. Focus on *Atmanirbhar Bharat* for economic sovereignty.

Conclusion

The decline of the US-led order marks the end of a unipolar era. A new global system is emerging—*multipolar, plural, and issue-driven*. The contest is not just military but ideological—between *liberal democracy* and *authoritarian capitalism*. China fills part of the void but lacks universal trust and legitimacy. India and the Global South must leverage this transition to –

1. Shape an inclusive and equitable world order.
2. Reinforce sovereignty and development-oriented cooperation.
3. Lead with credibility and moral authority in global governance.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/shashi-tharoor-world-american-order-10309216/>

Editorial of the Day – 17.10.2025**Index****1. None too soon – On the setting of the northeast monsoon – (TH)****2. Empower ASI to do its job – (IE)****1. None too soon – On the setting of the northeast monsoon****General Studies 1** – Geography**Topic** – Climate and Weather Patterns in India –

Northeast Monsoon Dynamics and Regional Impacts

Early Arrival of the Northeast Monsoon – A Boon and a Challenge for Southern India**Context**

The early onset of the northeast monsoon has brought encouraging news for farmers in southern India. Expected better rainfall promises enhanced crop growth and improved water security. However, above-normal rainfall forecasts demand increased preparedness for floods and infrastructure resilience.

Introduction

The northeast monsoon arrived on October 16, 2025, marking an early onset ahead of the normal date (October 20 $\pm$ 7 days). The arrival has brought relief and optimism to regions like Tamil Nadu and coastal Andhra Pradesh, which depend heavily on this monsoon for agriculture. With IMD forecasting above-normal rains, the focus must remain on disaster preparedness, urban flood management, and safeguarding livelihoods.

Early Arrival of the Northeast Monsoon

IMD confirmation – Onset on October 16, 2025, four days before the normal mean date. The northeast monsoon (also called the retreating monsoon) is vital for rainfall in peninsular India, especially the southeastern coast. This monsoon is driven by northeasterly trade winds that pick up moisture from the Bay of Bengal and bring rainfall to Tamil Nadu, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and parts of Karnataka. The IMD predicts above 112% of the long-period average (LPA) rainfall, indicating above-normal monsoon intensity. While beneficial for agriculture, such intensity also increases the risk of urban flooding and cyclonic storms.

Monsoon Facts and Forecast Summary

Feature	Detail
Normal onset date	October 20 ($\pm$ 7 days)
Actual onset (2025)	October 16
IMD forecast	Above 112% of LPA
Rainfall share (1971–2020)	Tamil Nadu – 48% of annual rainfall; Andhra Pradesh – 30%+
Cyclones expected	Minimum of 3 in Bay of Bengal
New concern	Increased cloudbursts and urban floods

Changing Weather Patterns and Rising Cloudbursts

A study by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) has found an increasing frequency of cloudbursts in recent years. Chennai and other urban centers remain vulnerable due to repeated flood disasters (notably 2015, 2021). Urbanization without adequate drainage and encroachment on wetlands have intensified flood risk. Above-normal rainfall + poor drainage = higher probability of waterlogging and loss of property and crops.

Government Preparedness and Institutional Response

The Tamil Nadu government is setting up a real-time flood-forecasting and early-warning system for Chennai. This will help monitor rainfall, manage reservoir releases, and control flood discharge effectively. Inter-agency coordination has improved across southern states, reducing flood-related casualties. Training of disaster response teams, upgrading machinery, and ensuring evacuation readiness have been prioritized. Digital mapping and hydrological modelling are being integrated into state disaster management frameworks.

Challenges and the Role of Citizens

Urban flood management gaps - Stormwater drains and city water channels remain clogged or poorly maintained. Encroachments and dumping of waste into lakes, rivers, and canals worsen blockages.

Public apathy - Many residents still blame only government agencies, neglecting their own civic duties. Lack of community ownership weakens local resilience. Real safety requires shared responsibility between citizens and authorities - Regular drain cleaning, solid waste segregation, and community awareness can significantly mitigate risk

Farm Sector Concerns

Fertilizer shortage - Farmers across southern India are reporting acute shortages of urea and other fertilizers during the sowing season. Tamil Nadu CM M. K. Stalin has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking immediate support to address shortages.

Union Agriculture Ministry has responded by increasing urea allocation -

October 2024 - 36.65 lakh tonnes

October 2025 - Higher allotment to meet demand

Other monsoon-dependent states (e.g., Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana) have also raised concerns. Ensuring timely input supply is critical to translate good monsoon conditions into higher yield.

Broader Implications

The northeast monsoon contributes significantly to India's overall food security, particularly for rice, pulses, and plantation crops.

Early and abundant rainfall can -

1. Refill reservoirs and aquifers,
2. Boost irrigation potential, and
3. Reduce power deficits in hydropower-dependent regions.

However, excess rainfall can trigger -

1. Crop damage, pest attacks, and soil erosion,
2. Urban flooding, and
3. Infrastructure strain in cities like Chennai and Puducherry.

Thus, climate adaptation strategies and sustainable water management are vital.

Conclusion

The early onset of the northeast monsoon symbolizes both hope and hazard for southern India. It offers an opportunity for agricultural prosperity but also demands strategic flood preparedness.

Governments must -

1. Strengthen drainage and flood-warning infrastructure,
2. Ensure fertilizer and input supply to farmers, and
3. Promote community-led waste management to prevent blockages.

Citizens must act responsibly to prevent waterlogging and pollution. With timely planning, improved coordination, and public participation, southern India can transform heavy rains into a sustainable and resilient opportunity for growth.

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/none-too-soon-on-the-setting-of-the-northeast-monsoon/article70172124.ece>

2. Empower ASI to do its job

General Studies 1 – History; Art & Culture

Topic – Conservation of Cultural Heritage in India –

Role of ASI and Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Heritage Preservation

Context

India possesses a rich and vast cultural heritage with over **3,600** centrally protected monuments and many unlisted sites. The central debate today – Should heritage conservation remain a government-led responsibility under the ASI or should it be opened up to private participation through PPPs? The issue highlights the tension between preservation, public access, and modern relevance.

Strengthening the ASI's Capacity and Vision

Role and Legacy of ASI

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), established in 1861 during British rule, is the apex institution for archaeological conservation and research. Historically, it was a scholarly and scientific body, leading global archaeological studies. Over time, however, the ASI has become bureaucratic, underfunded, and less adaptive to modern challenges such as urbanization, tourism, and digital preservation.

Present Concerns

Policymakers show a declining historical consciousness and lack creative policy imagination. The ASI's rigid structure and lack of professional autonomy have limited its efficiency. Privatization may risk turning monuments into commercial tourist commodities, undermining their cultural and historical integrity. The problem lies not in the ASI's existence, but in its resource scarcity, weak community outreach, and limited modernization.

Key Steps to Strengthen the ASI

Professional revitalization – Recruit archaeologists, conservation architects, historians, and heritage managers on merit.

Field-level engagement – Strengthen collaboration with local communities, universities, and cultural NGOs.

Public participation – Organize heritage walks, school programs, and citizen-led conservation drives.

Digitization – Archive ASI's documentation and excavation reports online for transparency and research access.

Institutional reform – Grant the ASI greater professional autonomy and allocate adequate financial resources.

Heritage should be preserved with continuity, historical sensitivity, and cultural consciousness, not reduced to profit-making ventures.

Past Model Example

The Delhi Urban Art Commission (DUAC) successfully integrated urban development with heritage conservation, serving as a model for balanced policy design.

Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Heritage Conservation

Need for PPPs

The state alone cannot manage the enormous scale and diversity of India's heritage. PPP models can mobilize additional financial, managerial, and technological resources. Encourages community ownership and local economic benefits through heritage-linked tourism.

Successful Example

The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum (Mumbai) restoration –

Collaboration between the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, INTACH, and private donors. Transformed a neglected colonial museum into a UNESCO award-winning heritage site. Showed that transparency, community involvement, and expert supervision can ensure success without commercialization.

Public Concerns

Risk of commercial exploitation and loss of authenticity if PPPs are profit-driven. Need for strict regulation, scientific restoration standards, and public accountability.

Key Steps to Strengthen PPP Models

Establish local heritage trusts involving authorities, experts, NGOs, and citizens. Link heritage to sustainable tourism and local crafts, ensuring economic benefit to surrounding communities. Ensure ASI or UNESCO supervision for maintaining scientific conservation standards.

Capacity building – Train local youth and artisans for long-term monument upkeep.

Promote community stewardship – Foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among residents.

Way Forward

Heritage conservation must be a shared responsibility – between the state, private sector, and civil society. Privatization should complement, not replace, government oversight. A hybrid model can combine –

1. State oversight and authenticity (through ASI)
2. Private innovation and funding (through PPPs)
3. Community involvement and local empowerment

Heritage management should integrate education, conservation, and sustainable development, ensuring that monuments serve both as cultural symbols and community assets. Ultimately, balanced heritage governance will preserve authenticity while promoting inclusive access, employment, and cultural pride.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/empower-asi-to-do-its-job-10311423/>



Editorial of the Day – 18.10.2025

Index

1. Claim, counterclaim – On India and foreign policy – (TH)

2. Rising CO₂ Levels – (IE)

1. Claim, counterclaim – On India and foreign policy

General Studies 2 – International Relations

Topic – India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests. Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

I. The Trigger – The Trump Claim and India's Response

The Incident – U.S. President Donald Trump publicly claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had assured him India would cease importing oil from Russia.¹ This placed India in an immediate diplomatic spotlight.

Contextual Backlash – This claim followed closely on the heels of Trump's previous controversial assertion regarding his mediation of an alleged "Operation Sindoor" ceasefire, highlighting a pattern of unpredictable U.S. diplomatic messaging.

India's Reaction – "Soft Denial" – The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) avoided an explicit refutation. It adopted a position of calibrated ambiguity, stating it had no knowledge of such a conversation, thereby neither confirming nor outright rejecting the President's claim.

Pattern of Restraint – This tactical restraint mirrored India's earlier non-confrontational approach during the "Operation Sindoor" controversy, indicating a consistent strategy of "quiet diplomacy" over public confrontation.

II. The Strategic Quandary – Factors Driving India's Ambiguity

Factor	Concern for India	Explanation of Strategy
Bilateral Trade Deal	Securing a near-term U.S.–India trade deal.	India seeks to avoid any action (like a direct public refutation of Trump) that could jeopardize ongoing economic and trade negotiations with the U.S.
China Factor	Managing the long-term Asian power balance.	India relies on strategic partnerships, including the U.S., for shared concerns over China's rise, necessitating a careful balancing act to maintain alignment.
Trump's Diplomacy Style	Unpredictable and transactional.	The "Art of the Deal" tactics employed by the U.S. administration make diplomatic coordination difficult, making Indian strategists prefer a measured, non-escalatory response.

III. The Larger Challenge – Moral Voice of a Rising Power

Tactical Utility vs. Moral Risk – While strategic ambiguity is tactically useful for preventing escalation and keeping dialogue open, its overuse risks being interpreted internationally as moral indecision or a lack of principle, particularly on crucial global issues like the Russia–Ukraine conflict.

Aspiration to Global Leadership – As India rises to become a global power, its foreign policy must transition from one driven solely by strategic convenience to one articulated with ethical consistency.

Credibility and Image – Moral clarity is essential for strengthening India's image as a responsible global power, distinguishing it from purely transactional diplomacy.

Principle over Appeasement – India's long-term credibility hinges not on appeasing great powers but on standing firm on universally accepted principles such as peace, sovereignty, and fairness.

Source – https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/claim-counterclaim-on-india-and-foreign-policy/article70175673.ece#google_vignette

2. Rising CO₂ Levels

General Studies 3 – Environment

Topic – Climate Change and Global Warming – Rising

CO₂ Levels, Greenhouse Gas Dynamics, and Global Climate Governance

Rising CO₂ Levels – Causes, Consequences, and Global Governance Challenges

Context –

Between 2023 and 2024, the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) recorded its sharpest annual increase since systematic observations began in 1957, signaling both intensifying human emissions and weakening natural carbon sinks.

CO₂ and Its Role in Climate Change

CO₂ is the most significant anthropogenic greenhouse gas, responsible for the largest share of global warming. Although less potent molecule-to-molecule than methane (CH₄) or nitrous oxide (N₂O), its long atmospheric lifespan (hundreds to thousands of years) causes cumulative warming. Currently, CO₂ contributes to over 66% of total radiative forcing since the pre-industrial era. Pre-industrial concentration – 278 ppm, current levels show an increase of nearly 152%. The year 2024 became the warmest on record, with global temperatures rising 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels, surpassing the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C threshold. Persistent crossing of this threshold threatens polar ice melt, sea-level rise, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem collapse.

Sources of Rising CO₂ Levels

Anthropogenic sources –

1. Burning of fossil fuels for power, industry, and transportation.
2. Deforestation and large-scale land-use changes reducing natural carbon sinks.
3. Industrial processes like cement and steel production.

Natural feedback mechanisms – Climate-induced feedbacks such as forest fires, droughts, and ocean warming are adding to CO₂ accumulation.

Carbon Cycle and Weakening Natural Sinks

CO₂ circulates through the natural carbon cycle, exchanged between atmosphere, oceans, and terrestrial ecosystems. Normally, 50% of human-emitted CO₂ is absorbed by natural sinks – forests (photosynthesis) and oceans (dissolution). In 2024, WMO reported a decline in the efficiency of these sinks –

1. Oceans absorbed less CO₂ due to reduced solubility in warmer waters.
2. Heatwaves and droughts decreased terrestrial uptake by vegetation.
3. Forest fires and land degradation released stored carbon back into the atmosphere.

This forms a vicious feedback loop, where warming reduces Earth's capacity to regulate CO₂, further intensifying climate change.

Other Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) and Their Impact

Methane (CH₄) –

1. Reached 1,542 parts per billion (ppb) in 2024.
2. Has 25 times higher heat-trapping ability than CO₂ but persists only for ~12 years.
3. Emitted from livestock, landfills, and fossil fuel extraction.

Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) –

1. Rose to 338 ppb in 2024.
2. About 270 times more potent than CO₂; persists for over a century.
3. Major source – Agriculture (fertilizers, manure management).

Together, CH₄ and N₂O contribute to one-third of total global warming.

Global Climate Governance and Policy Gaps – The Paris Agreement (2015) under UNFCCC aims to limit global warming to below 2°C and strive for 1.5°C. Despite this, global emissions continue to rise, and most Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are insufficient for 2030 targets.

Key structural challenges

1. Inequitable responsibility between developed and developing countries.
2. Insufficient climate finance and technology transfer from the Global North.
3. Continued dependence on fossil fuels and delay in transitioning to renewables.
4. Weak implementation and accountability mechanisms in global climate regimes.

Implications of Rising CO₂ and Weak Climate Action

1. Accelerates global temperature rise and climate instability.
2. Intensifies extreme weather events, droughts, and floods.
3. Threatens food and water security, especially in vulnerable regions.
4. Increases the risk of crossing climatic tipping points, such as ice sheet collapse and permafrost thawing.
5. Undermines global biodiversity and long-term planetary sustainability.

Way Forward

The sharp CO₂ rise between 2023–2024 serves as a climate emergency warning.

Key action areas -

1. Deep, science-based emission reductions across all sectors.
2. Strengthening carbon sinks through afforestation, soil restoration, and wetland protection.
3. Expanding renewable energy and carbon capture technologies.
4. Enforcing climate accountability and improving transparency in NDCs.
5. Enhancing global cooperation for equitable climate finance and green technology access.

A comprehensive global strategy integrating mitigation, adaptation, and ecosystem resilience is vital to prevent irreversible climate tipping points.

Source - <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-climate/explained-rising-co2-levels-10313591/#~~~text=Globally%20averaged%20CO2%20concentration%20near.during%20the%202011%2D2020%20decade.>

Editorial of the Day – 22.10.2025

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1. Unreliable air and noise data, real-time deception – (TH)

2. On Air, Connect the Dots – (IE)

1. Unreliable air and noise data, real-time deception

General Studies 3 – Environment

Topic – Pollution, Environmental Governance, and Data

Integrity

1. Context and Core Issue

Recent failures in India's environmental monitoring systems—Delhi's *Real-Time Air Pollution Network* and Lucknow's *National Ambient Noise Monitoring Network*—have exposed systemic flaws. These failures highlight how unreliable environmental data weakens public policy, erodes citizen trust, and damages India's global credibility in environmental governance.

2. The Problem – Unreliable Data and Governance Crisis

Delhi's Air Monitoring Failure – Sensors are incorrectly placed (under trees, behind walls, near obstructions), leading to distorted readings. In some cases, there were proposals to install sensors in cleaner areas, underestimating pollution levels intentionally. Dashboards often classify air as “moderate” despite visibly hazardous smog – creating a *data-reality gap*.

Governance Failure – Such manipulation of environmental data represents a breakdown of accountability. When data loses credibility, the foundation of environmental policy becomes unstable and illegitimate.

3. The Importance of Sound Data for Environmental Policy

Policy decisions on stubble burning, vehicular limits, or industrial emissions depend on *scientifically valid and representative* data. Distorted or unverified data can misdirect policy interventions and hinder effective outcomes. Weak monitoring mechanisms undermine India's international commitments, including –

1. *Paris Agreement targets* on emissions.
2. *WHO Air Quality Guidelines* for public health protection.

4. The Lucknow Case – Faulty Noise Monitoring System

The National Ambient Noise Monitoring Network in Lucknow failed to capture true decibel levels. The *Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000* remain outdated and below WHO standards. Weak enforcement and negligible penalties make noise control policies ineffective. Former Environment Minister Anil Madhav Dave (2017) had highlighted these flaws in Parliament, but no systemic reform followed.

5. Policy Consequences and Constitutional Dimensions

Misleading air and noise data lead to policy paralysis – delaying action by courts and government agencies. In Delhi, inaccurate AQI readings delay judicial interventions on pollution-related cases. In Lucknow, faulty noise data affect citizens' *fundamental rights* under Articles 19 (Right to Expression) and 21 (Right to Life). The Supreme Court's move to transfer noise pollution cases to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) signals recognition of pollution as a *public health and fundamental rights issue*, not just a nuisance.

6. Missing Pillars of Environmental Data Governance

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) provides detailed guidelines for –

1. Sensor placement and calibration
2. Periodic audits and data transparency

However, enforcement remains weak due to –

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1. Political interference
2. Absence of *independent scientific oversight*

Unlike international standards, India's monitoring networks lack third-party audits and independent review panels. Class-1 quality sensors are installed at high cost but without transparency or accountability in operation.

7. Public Health Implications of Flawed Monitoring

Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) estimates – If Delhi's air met WHO standards, life expectancy could increase by 8.2 years. Across India, air pollution reduces life expectancy by 5 years. Misrepresentation of air quality data conceals health emergencies and diverts accountability. Studies link long-term exposure to NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ with –

1. Weakened lung function
2. Asthma and cardiovascular issues
3. Accelerated myopia in children

Behind every misleading dataset lies real human suffering — children, elderly, and vulnerable populations face preventable harm.

8. Science as the Foundation of Environmental Monitoring

Accurate monitoring must rest on scientific discipline and independent oversight. Key recommendations for reform –

1. Strict adherence to scientific protocols in sensor installation and calibration.
2. Independent expert supervision to ensure data validity.
3. Raw data access to the public for transparency.
4. Regular third-party audits of air and noise data.
5. Citizen oversight mechanisms to enhance accountability and trust.

9. Broader Governance and Democratic Implications

In a democracy, misleading health and pollution data undermines public trust and accountability. Flawed data supports inaction, suppressing citizens' voices demanding their right to health and a clean environment. Real-time systems must *reflect real conditions*, not serve as bureaucratic façades. *Technology without transparency* becomes a tool of deception rather than empowerment.

10. The Way Forward – Data Integrity as the Core of Governance

Environmental governance in India stands at a critical juncture. Robust data integrity, scientific rigour, and transparent oversight are indispensable to –

1. Protect public health
2. Fulfil constitutional rights
3. Strengthen India's environmental diplomacy and credibility

Without trustworthy data, policies become *performance without purpose*. Restoring public trust in environmental data is the first step toward accountable and sustainable governance.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/unreliable-air-and-noise-data-real-time-deception/article70187261.ece>

2. On Air, Connect the Dots

General Studies 3 – Environment **Topic –** Air Pollution, Climate Interaction, and Environmental Governance

1. Context – India's Winter Pollution Pattern

India's winter season, especially in North India, is typically marked by poor air quality due to both meteorological and anthropogenic factors. Despite a temporary improvement in air quality during autumn 2025, this must be interpreted in a broader climatic context, as conditions may worsen during

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the winter months. The improvement is short-term and situational, not indicative of a systemic environmental recovery.

2. Factors Behind Short-Term Improvement in Air Quality (Autumn 2025)

Timely monsoon withdrawal – This year's monsoon withdrew on time, unlike in previous years where delays caused air stagnation.

Warmer-than-usual weather – Enhanced atmospheric dispersion helped dilute surface pollutants.

Favourable meteorological conditions – Sustained wind movement and less humidity allowed pollutants to disperse more efficiently.

Result – Air quality during Diwali 2025 was relatively better compared to severe smog episodes of previous years.

However, these conditions are temporary and meteorologically driven, not due to structural policy change.

3. El Niño–La Niña Transition Effects on Air Quality

El Niño phase (previous years) – Characterized by higher surface temperatures and altered rainfall, which affected India's monsoon dynamics.

Transition to weak La Niña (current phase) –

1. Brings cooler global temperatures but can prolong Indian winters.
2. Causes stagnant air layers, reducing vertical and horizontal atmospheric mixing.
3. Promotes pollutant accumulation near the surface from vehicular, industrial, and biomass-burning sources.

Implication – Cleaner air during Diwali could be followed by increased pollution in November–December due to longer, stagnant winter periods.

4. Stubble Burning and Delayed Harvest – Agricultural Linkage

Stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana remains a significant seasonal contributor to North India's smog.

Delayed paddy harvest – Caused by erratic rainfall and climate variability. This delay shifts stubble burning peaks to late October and November, coinciding with low temperatures and slow wind speeds, worsening pollution episodes. Despite policy measures like in-situ residue management and financial incentives, enforcement remains weak.

Systemic problem – Lack of sustainable alternatives such as bioenergy conversion, composting infrastructure, and crop diversification.

5. Climate–Air Quality Interaction – The Systemic Link

Air pollution in India cannot be seen as an isolated urban or seasonal issue. It is part of a larger climate–air feedback system, where –

1. Warmer global temperatures intensify urban heat islands, trapping pollutants.
2. Altered monsoon and rainfall variability reduce natural atmospheric cleansing.
3. Deforestation and land-use change further exacerbate particulate matter retention.

Hence, air quality management must integrate climate adaptation policies for effectiveness.

6. Policy and Governance Implications

Fragmented interventions—such as seasonal crackdowns or temporary restrictions—fail to produce long-term results. Policymakers must adopt scientifically informed, data-driven, and anticipatory approaches, including –

1. Strengthening early warning systems (e.g., SAFAR-based air forecasts).
2. Interlinking climate models with air quality forecasting for preventive action.
3. Promoting electric mobility, public transport, and bioenergy from agricultural residues.
4. Expanding urban green buffers to reduce pollutant concentration.
5. Ensuring citizen participation and inter-state coordination between Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, and UP.

7. Long-Term Challenge of Air Pollution

Better air quality during Diwali 2025 should not create complacency. Weak La Niña, delayed stubble burning, and cooling atmospheric conditions are likely to cause extended smog episodes during November–December 2025. These will impact public health, transportation, and economic productivity if not mitigated proactively. The challenge lies in transforming reactive pollution management into predictive, climate-integrated planning.

8. Way Forward – Towards Climate-Aware Air Quality Strategy

Adopt a holistic and integrated approach that combines –

1. Climate adaptation policies (addressing temperature and rainfall shifts)
2. Agricultural reform (promoting sustainable crop residue management)
3. Urban emission reduction (through transport electrification and cleaner fuels)
4. Meteorological data integration for real-time policy action.

Cross-sectoral coordination among ministries (MoEFCC, Agriculture, Urban Development, Power) is essential. Build resilience through research, regional cooperation, and public awareness. Recognize air quality improvement as both an environmental and public health imperative, aligned with SDG 3 (Good Health) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Source – https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-indian-express/20251022/281981793813202?srltid=AfmBOoo_stEJWOIKsTnbidjgcQIFa8-cq5_MtYIBNSBVnodLUXITctvX



Editorial of the Day – 23.10.2025

Index

1. Tapping the shine – On the solar industry in India – (TH)

2. Nutrition Needs Nuance – (IE)

1. Tapping the shine – On the solar industry in India

General Studies 3 – Environment Topic – Energy – Renewable Energy, Solar Power Development, and Climate Commitments

1. Context – Solar Power as a Strategic Pillar of Energy Transition

India's energy mix is undergoing a historic transformation — from coal dominance to renewable expansion. Solar power lies at the core of India's climate strategy, sustainability goals, and energy security framework. As India becomes the world's 3rd-largest solar producer, the focus now shifts from capacity building to global competitiveness and export diversification. Ensuring economic sustainability of the solar sector is critical to maintaining industrial momentum and climate credibility.

2. India's Solar Power Journey – Growth and Achievements

Solar energy has evolved into one of India's most dynamic industries.

Global standing – 3rd-largest solar energy producer (after China and the U.S.), surpassing Japan (IREA 2024–25).

Generation capacity – 1,08,494 GWh of solar power in 2024–25.

Installed capacity – Increased from 2 GW in 2014 to 100 GW in 2025 (as per MNRE).

Effective operational capacity – Around 85 GW, highlighting the gap between installed and functional output.

Solar energy has become cheaper than coal since 2017, driving rapid private-sector investment in utility-scale projects. Represents India's shift toward climate-resilient and low-carbon power generation.

3. Policy Commitments and Capacity Targets

Under India's updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) – 50% of total installed electricity capacity will come from non-fossil sources by 2030 (~500 GW). Solar's share – 250–280 GW by 2030.

To meet this, India needs to add around 30 GW per year, but the current pace is only 17–23 GW annually. This shortfall risks delaying India's renewable energy and climate goals under the Paris Agreement.

4. Cost Challenges and Global Competitiveness

Indian solar modules are **1.5 to 2 times costlier** than Chinese modules.

Reasons –

1. Smaller economies of scale.
2. Dependence on imported raw materials like polysilicon and wafers.
3. Fragmented supply chains and higher logistics costs.

While India has ramped up capacity, China dominates the global solar market, exporting 236 GW in 2024. India's exports to the U.S. (4 GW in 2024) benefited temporarily from U.S. import restrictions on Chinese modules. Without new global markets, India's domestic overcapacity could lead to underutilization and financial strain.

5. Domestic Policy Initiatives Supporting Solar Expansion

PM-KUSUM Scheme – Promotes solar-powered irrigation pumps and decentralized rural solar generation.

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PM-Surya Ghar Scheme – Encourages rooftop solar adoption in urban and semi-urban households. Both schemes face implementation delays due to financial constraints, slow subsidy disbursal, and grid integration issues. Nevertheless, these programs serve as model templates for international collaboration, particularly in Africa.

6. Strategic Expansion through Solar Diplomacy – Africa as a Key Market

India seeks to become a global solar supplier, leveraging the International Solar Alliance (ISA) framework. Africa presents a strategic opportunity –

1. Only 4% of arable land in Africa is irrigated due to energy shortages.
2. Enormous potential for solar-powered irrigation, microgrids, and rural electrification.

By offering affordable and decentralized solar solutions, India can –

1. Strengthen South-South cooperation.
2. Counterbalance China's dominance in African renewable markets.
3. Ensure sustainable demand for its expanding solar manufacturing base.

This aligns with India's vision of solar diplomacy – combining development aid, trade, and climate leadership.

7. Industrial Sustainability and Export Strategy

To remain competitive, India must focus on –

Value chain localization – From polysilicon to solar cells and modules.

Research and innovation – Improve module efficiency and reduce material dependency.

Export diversification – Target emerging markets in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Strategic financing – Through EXIM Bank and ISA-backed credit mechanisms for developing countries.

India must evolve from a *domestic producer* to a *global solar technology supplier*.

8. Summary Table

Aspect	Key Data / Observation	Implication
Global Rank	3rd after China and the U.S.	Major renewable power player
Solar Generation (2024–25)	1,08,494 GWh	Surpassed Japan
Manufacturing Capacity	2 GW (2014) → 100 GW (2025)	Rapid expansion
Effective Capacity	~85 GW	Gap between installed and operational output
Annual Capacity Addition	Required – 30 GW; Actual – 17–23 GW	Need acceleration
Cost Factor	1.5–2× higher than China	Competitive disadvantage
Exports (2024)	India – 4 GW vs China – 236 GW	Limited market access
Key Schemes	PM-KUSUM, PM-Surya Ghar	Domestic growth and Africa models
ISA Role	Global solar diplomacy	Expands market and strengthens leadership

9. Challenges Hindering Long-Term Growth

1. High input costs and dependency on imports for key components.
2. Limited financing for startups and MSMEs in solar manufacturing.
3. Slow pace of rooftop and decentralized solar adoption.
4. Grid integration issues due to variable generation patterns.
5. Trade barriers and global price competition limiting export potential.

10. Way Forward – Building a Sustainable and Competitive Solar Ecosystem

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Boost domestic manufacturing – Deepen production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for the full solar value chain.

Enhance efficiency – Invest in R&D for next-generation solar technologies (perovskite, bifacial, thin-film).

Integrate climate and trade policy – Align export financing with ISA-led partnerships.

Create new markets abroad – Establish *India–Africa Solar Corridors* and regional solar parks.

Encourage innovation and affordability – Develop modular and portable systems for rural use.

Ensure energy equity – Link solar growth with livelihood generation and rural development.

This integrated approach will ensure India's solar transition is economically viable, globally competitive, and socially inclusive.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/tapping-the-shine-on-the-solar-industry-in-india/article70190555.ece>

2. Nutrition Needs Nuance

General Studies 2 – Governance **Topic** – Issues Relating to Health, Nutrition, and Human Development

1. Context and Overview

Nutrition forms the foundation of public health, influencing productivity, immunity, and disease prevention. In India, the nutrition discourse is often oversimplified, focusing narrowly on calorie intake and cereal consumption rather than dietary diversity and quality. A more nuanced understanding of dietary habits, socio-economic context, and market dynamics is essential to address the dual challenge of undernutrition and overnutrition.

2. Dual Burden of Malnutrition

India faces a dual nutritional burden – Undernutrition among vulnerable groups—children, women, and rural poor. Overnutrition and obesity among urban and semi-urban populations, leading to rising non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes and cardiovascular disorders.

Key reasons – Transition from traditional diets to ultra-processed, calorie-dense foods rich in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. Rapid urbanization, rising incomes, and sedentary lifestyles.

This creates a paradox – caloric sufficiency coexisting with micronutrient deficiencies.

3. Changing Dietary Patterns

Generalized dietary guidelines are often ineffective because they ignore regional, cultural, and economic diversity. Need for context-specific interventions considering –

1. Regional food habits.
2. Socioeconomic class and affordability.
3. Cultural dietary preferences.

Protein intake – Essential for metabolic health, but excessive reliance on limited plant-based sources can reduce nutritional balance.

Low-fat diet misconceptions – Overemphasis leads to increased consumption of refined carbohydrates, worsening obesity and metabolic issues.

Rising sugar consumption and energy-dense food intake correlate with increasing obesity and diabetes cases. According to MoSPI, per capita calorie consumption has risen – but from nutrient-poor, processed sources, not wholesome foods.

4. Structural and Policy Limitations

Agricultural policy bias – Overemphasis on cereal production (rice and wheat) due to Green Revolution legacies, neglecting pulses, millets, and horticultural crops.

Market dynamics – Cheap availability and aggressive marketing of ultra-processed foods distort consumer choices.

Nutritional policy gap – Current frameworks often fail to integrate agriculture, health, and education policies cohesively.

Public health messaging remains simplistic – calorie counts, “eat less fat,” or “more protein” – lacking nuance about balance and diversity.

5. Policy Response – Towards Integrated Nutrition Governance

a) Aligning Agricultural and Public Health Policies –

1. Promote crop diversification toward pulses, fruits, vegetables, and millets.
2. Incentivize sustainable agriculture and production of nutrient-rich foods.
3. Ensure affordability and accessibility of diverse food items through markets and public distribution systems.

b) Regulatory and Economic Measures –

1. Introduce front-of-pack labeling for high-sugar and high-fat foods.
2. Impose taxes on ultra-processed foods and limit marketing targeting children.
3. Strengthen food safety and quality standards.

c) Public Awareness and Behavioural Change –

1. Move beyond calorie-centric campaigns.
2. Integrate nutritional literacy in schools, workplaces, and community programs.
3. Encourage awareness on portion control, balanced meals, and cooking practices.

d) Linking Nutrition with Ecology and Economy –

1. Local food systems and farmer incentives must align with nutritional outcomes.
2. Focus on reducing post-harvest losses and improving supply chain efficiency.
3. Promote eco-nutrition – linking sustainable agriculture with dietary health.

6. Challenges

1. Persistence of socio-economic inequalities affects access to nutritious food.
2. Cultural inertia and food habits make behavioral change slow.
3. Weak inter-ministerial coordination between agriculture, health, and education sectors.
4. Data limitations in capturing dietary diversity and regional consumption patterns.
5. Private sector influence in food marketing and pricing distorts health priorities.

7. Way Forward

Shift from reductionist to holistic nutrition strategies that combine –

1. Scientific evidence (on nutrient balance and metabolic health),
2. Cultural realities (local diets, traditions),
3. Economic incentives (making healthy food affordable),
4. Environmental sustainability (sustainable crop systems).

Focus on “Food Systems Approach” – integrating production, distribution, consumption, and health. Strengthen community-level nutrition surveillance and targeted interventions for vulnerable groups. Develop region-specific dietary guidelines that reflect India’s diversity rather than one-size-fits-all models.

Source – <https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-indian-express/20251023/281943139109818?srsItd=AfmBOorlY3hYlhWBIK1sI9OS5D5F812CJoQxCh5PkxRafTuSxVOPFyqo>

Editorial of the Day – 24.10.2025

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1. Good job – On Tamil Nadu and women in hazardous jobs – (TH)

General Studies 2 – Social Justice

Topic – Labour Reforms, Gender Equality in Workforce,

Workplace Safety & Women Empowerment

Introduction

Tamil Nadu's decision to permit women to work in operations previously classified as hazardous marks an important stride toward advancing gender equality in industrial labour. This change challenges historical assumptions that restricted women from certain forms of work, instead recognizing their capability to operate across multiple sectors. By amending the Tamil Nadu Factories Rules, 1950, the State signals confidence in women's autonomy while ensuring that safeguards remain in place.

Gradual Progress in Labour Reforms

Labour reforms generally evolve through sustained incremental changes rather than abrupt policy shifts. Tamil Nadu's recent proposal allowing women to work in nearly 20 categories of hazardous industrial operations reflects a continuing reform trajectory. The amendment permits women to take up roles earlier reserved exclusively for men, with exceptions only for pregnant women and adolescents. This demonstrates a shift from a protectionist, paternalistic approach to one emphasizing equality, capability, and safety-based regulation.

Expanding Employment Opportunities for Women

The State had earlier removed restrictions on women working night shifts in factories, signalling broader labour liberalization. Under the latest rule, women can be assigned night duties only with written consent, ensuring participation is voluntary and free from coercion. These reforms collectively dismantle stereotypes portraying women as inherently vulnerable or requiring constant state/organizational protection. The policy affirms women's right to choose their occupation and conditions of employment.

Broadening Scope of Occupations Open to Women

The new rules allow women to work in multiple industrial processes, including –

1. Electrolytic processes and glass manufacturing
2. Lead and manganese compound handling
3. Gas and petroleum generation activities
4. Blasting operations, tanning of raw hides and skins
5. Fireworks, match factories, and pesticide manufacturing
6. Chemical industries producing carcinogenic dye intermediates
7. Hazardous workplaces involving benzene, high noise, or vibration exposure.

Opening these sectors normalizes women's presence even in traditionally male-dominated industrial environments, promoting greater inclusivity in skill development and employment.

Beyond Legal Permission – Need for Supportive Workplace Infrastructure

Legal reforms must be supported through workplace-level changes, including –

Adequate sanitation facilities such as separate toilets and changing rooms

Medical check rooms and regular health assessments

Secure transportation and compulsory drop-home arrangements for night-shift workers

Safety gear designed specifically considering women's physiology

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Effective implementation will require cooperation between industry management, monitoring by labour departments, and periodic inspections to prevent workplace exploitation or unsafe conditions.

Ensuring Freedom, Not Forced Participation

The objective is to enlarge opportunities, not to oblige women to take up hazardous roles. Women must retain full freedom to opt out without fear of losing wages, promotions, or employment. Equity is meaningful only when accompanied by autonomy, safety, dignity, and non-discrimination in the workplace.

Conclusion

The amendment signifies an essential move toward removing structural and legal barriers faced by women in industrial employment. However, the success of this reform depends on how effectively workplaces implement safety measures, consent systems, and support services. Tamil Nadu's initiative can become a model for inclusive and gender-equitable industrial growth if matched with practical sensitivity, adequate monitoring, and investment in supportive infrastructure.

Source - <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/good-job-on-tamil-nadu-and-women-in-hazardous-jobs/article70194321.ece>

2. Execution Petitions

GS2/Polity & Governance; Judiciary

Recent Supreme Court data reveals that over 8.82 lakh execution petitions are pending across district courts nationwide, 3.38 lakh new petitions were filed in just six months, calling the situation 'highly disappointing' and 'alarming'.

About the Execution Petitions

It is a legal application filed by a decree-holder — a person who has won a civil case — to enforce the court's judgment, like -

1. Recovering a monetary award;
2. Taking possession of property;
3. Enforcing an injunction or specific performance;

It is governed by Order XXI of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, which outlines the procedures for executing various types of decrees. It is supposed to be the final and most straightforward stage of litigation. The lower courts are responsible for processing these petitions, but they often become mired in procedural delays and resistance from judgment-debtors.

Why Does This Matters?

The pendency of execution petitions undermines public faith in the judiciary. For litigants, it means -

1. Continued financial and emotional strain.
2. No closure despite winning a case.
3. A perception that justice is inaccessible or ineffective.

Why Execution Petitions Are Stuck?

Delays Built Into Procedure - The Civil Procedure Code (CPC) mandates several steps — issuing notices, hearing objections, and providing multiple opportunities to the losing party — all of which stretch over months or even years.

Data from the NJDG - According to the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) -

An average civil suit takes 4.91 years to conclude.

An execution petition takes another 3.97 years.

Nearly 47.2% of pending execution cases were filed before 2020.

Top Reasons for Delay -

Counsel not available - **38.9%**

Stay by another court - **17%**

Awaiting documents - **12%**

Other Reasons for Delay

Low Priority – Execution petitions are often treated as administrative rather than judicial matters, leading to deprioritization.

Procedural Complexities – The process involves multiple steps—notice issuance, objections, attachment of property, and sometimes police assistance.

Resistance from Judgment Debtors – Many use legal tactics to delay compliance, including filing frivolous objections or appeals.

Lack of Monitoring – Until recently, there was minimal oversight on how long execution petitions remained pending.

Key Efforts in Reducing Execution Petitions

Supreme Court's Past Efforts – It has previously intervened to fix delays in execution proceedings. In 2021, a three-judge bench led by then CJI SA Bobde issued 14 mandatory directions to trial courts, including a six-month deadline for disposing of execution matters. In March 2025, while hearing a decades-old property dispute, the current bench directed all High Courts to collect and monitor district-level data on pending executions and ensure their disposal within six months. The Supreme Court has granted six more months to all High Courts to expedite disposal, and directed the Registrar General of the Karnataka High Court to explain non-compliance with earlier orders.

Legal Reforms – The Law Commission of India, in its 14th Report, had recommended reforms to streamline execution proceedings. It led to amendments in the CPC in 1976, allowing executing courts to adjudicate all related questions, including those of title, within the same proceedings – eliminating the need for separate suits.

Policy Recommendations – Dedicated execution benches in civil courts;

1. Digitization and tracking of execution cases;
2. Strict timelines and performance audits for judicial officers;

Conclusion

The backlog of execution petitions exposes a deep structural flaw in India's judicial machinery. Litigants often wait years to receive the fruits of justice, despite winning in court. The Supreme Court's strong words – describing this as a 'travesty of justice' – serve as a call for systemic reform, improved judicial data systems, and a renewed commitment to ensuring that justice delivered on paper translates into justice in practice.

SOURCE – <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-law/pendency-courts-execution-petitions-supreme-court-data-10324597/>

3. Sanctuary Status for the Forest Saranda – (IE)

GENERAL STUDIES 3 – ENVIRONMENT

TOPIC – Conservation of biodiversity and wildlife

(specifically sanctuaries and elephant reserves/corridors).

1. Ecological and Strategic Significance of Saranda

Geographical Identity – Located in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district, Saranda is India's largest sal (*Shorea robusta*) forest, spanning over 82,000 hectares.

Biodiversity Hotspot – It is an ecological treasure, providing habitat for over 200 species of flora and fauna, including critical populations of elephants and leopards.

Critical Wildlife Corridor – Saranda is a vital component of the Singhbhum Elephant Reserve. It functions as a crucial migratory corridor connecting wildlife populations between Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh.

Ecosystem Services – The dense sal canopy and numerous water streams make it a massive natural carbon sink, essential for the ecological balance of India's eastern forest ecosystem.

The Resource Conflict – This immense ecological wealth coexists with vast deposits of high-quality iron ore, making the region a prime target for intensive industrial mining.

2. Rationale and History of the Sanctuary Proposal

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Historical Context – The initial recommendation to declare Saranda a wildlife sanctuary dates back to 1968 (by the then-Bihar government).

Renewed Urgency – The proposal gained new momentum due to extensive reports of –

1. Mining-induced degradation of the forest canopy.
2. Significant loss and fragmentation of elephant habitat.

Expert Endorsement – The sanctuary proposal has been repeatedly recommended by top conservation bodies, including the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

Judicial Intervention – Due to the state government's failure to act on recommendations, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) intervened in 2020. The NGT directed the Jharkhand government to finalize the sanctuary proposal under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Continued state inaction has now led environmentalists to escalate the case to the Supreme Court, which is currently examining the matter.

3. Core Conflict – Environmental vs. Economic Dimensions

Mining Impacts – Decades of mining have caused severe environmental damage –

Habitat Fragmentation – Mining leases and infrastructure (roads, facilities) have broken up contiguous forest patches, isolating wildlife.

Disruption of Corridors – Elephant migration routes have been severely disrupted, leading to increased human-animal conflict.

Water Pollution – The dumping of "red-mud waste" (iron ore tailings) has contaminated rivers and streams, harming aquatic life and local communities.

Policy Failure – The 2011 Saranda Action Plan, which was intended for rehabilitation and reforestation, has shown limited success precisely because new and existing mining leases continued to operate.

Legal Implications of Sanctuary Status – Declaring Saranda a sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, would –

1. Provide the highest level of legal protection to the forest.
2. Impose strict regulations on industrial and mining activities within its boundaries, potentially halting new leases and restricting existing ones.
3. Create a legal framework to promote and fund community-based conservation efforts.

4. The Tribal Rights Dimension (Ho Community)

Constitutional Safeguards – Saranda is a Scheduled Area under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution.

Affected Population – The region is predominantly inhabited by Adivasi communities, primarily the Ho tribe, who have a deep symbiotic relationship with the forest for their livelihood and cultural identity (dependence on Non-Timber Forest Produce – NTFP).

The PESA Act – The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) mandates that the local *gram sabhas* (village councils) must be consulted before any acquisition or alteration of land use.

The Dilemma –

Criticism – Critics argue that declaring a sanctuary without the free, prior, and informed consent of these gram sabhas would be a violation of the PESA Act and the Fifth Schedule, potentially alienating the very communities that protect the forest.

Counter-argument – Proponents suggest that a well-designed sanctuary status, centered on **eco-tourism** and sustainable forest-based livelihoods, could economically empower the tribal communities while ensuring biodiversity protection.

5. Way Forward – A Balanced and Inclusive Approach

Central Challenge – The Saranda issue is a classic example of the need to reconcile ecological integrity with developmental pressures and community rights.

Recommended Actions –

Prioritize Ecological Restoration – Implement scientific restoration programs for areas already degraded by mining.

Enforce Mining Accountability – Hold mining companies legally and financially responsible for environmental remediation ("polluter pays" principle).

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Centralize Community Participation – Ensure that the Ho tribe and local gram sabhas are not just consulted but are central partners in the decision-making, design, and management of the protected area.

Constitutional Mandate – A successful resolution would uphold India's constitutional commitments under –

1. **Article 48A** (DPSP – State's duty to protect the environment and wildlife).
2. **Article 21** (Right to Life, which the Supreme Court has interpreted to include the Right to a Healthy Environment).

Final Goal – Granting sanctuary status through a participatory and sustainable process can make Saranda a model for inclusive conservation in India, demonstrating that ecological protection and tribal welfare can be mutually reinforcing.

Source – https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-indian-express/20251024/282389815710830?srltid=AfmBOop4WPkx0pLcWeGcjlFu_pta8gWE89M9Kw8YiSYtzOjwj-pCH4Ex

4. Urban Governance

GS2/Governance

Urban India is buckling under the weight of rapid, unplanned growth, with dysfunctions ranging from clogged drains and toxic air to flooded streets and crumbling infrastructure – highlighting the urgent need for empowered city-level governance, often stifled by state control.

About India's Urban Governance

India's urban landscape is undergoing a profound transformation, shaped by rapid population growth, infrastructure expansion, and evolving governance frameworks. Currently, over 30% of the population resides in cities in India and contributes nearly 70% of India's GDP, and projections suggest that the population aims to rise to nearly 50% by 2050.

Governance Crisis in Urban India

Unfulfilled Promise of Constitutional Framework – The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) of 1992 granted constitutional status to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), envisioning them as self-governing institutions responsible for urban development and service delivery. The 12th Schedule of the Constitution assigned 18 functions to these bodies, including urban planning, sanitation, solid waste management, and poverty alleviation. However, a CAG Audit in 2024 exposes that on average, only 4 out of 18 functions are under their full control, with state governments and parastatal agencies frequently intervening in local governance.

Lack of Administrative Autonomy – ULBs often cannot recruit their own staff – personnel assessments are conducted by state authorities, leading to severe staff shortages. For example, the Shimla Municipal Corporation required 720 personnel but was sanctioned only 20 new posts. Across 18 states, one-third of all sanctioned positions remain vacant, crippling ULBs' capacity to perform essential functions.

Democratic Deficit and Institutional Neglect – The 74th Amendment mandated institutional mechanisms like State Election Commissions (SECs), District Planning Committees (DPCs), and Metropolitan Planning Committees (MPCs) to ensure accountability and coordinated planning. But, the CAG audit in 2024 found widespread neglect of these provisions –

1. 61% (1,600 of 2,625) ULBs in 17 states lack an elected council.
2. Only five states appoint mayors through direct elections.
3. Just 10 states have constituted DPCs, and only three have prepared annual district plans.

Of the nine states required to form MPCs, only three have functional committees.

Financial Distress and Fiscal Dependence – Many states have failed to regularly constitute State Finance Commissions (SFCs), delaying fiscal transfers and weakening local finances.

1. According to the CAG, across 15 states, ULBs faced an average shortfall of ₹1,606 crore due to partial release of recommended funds.

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2. Furthermore, despite being empowered to collect property taxes, ULBs cannot fix or revise tax rates independently, with many taxes still pegged at outdated values.
3. It leads to a 42% expenditure–revenue gap across 11 states, forcing ULBs to allocate just 29% of their funds to development activities — far below what is needed for sustainable infrastructure and service delivery.

Major Efforts & Initiatives in Urban Governance

National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) – It was launched to create a digital backbone for urban India; It enables citizen–centric governance through platforms like –

1. **India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX)** for secure data sharing;
2. **SmartCode** for collaborative urban tech development;
3. **Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS)** for project monitoring;

Smart Cities Mission – Aims to develop 100 cities with smart infrastructure, e–governance, and sustainable urban planning; Focuses on integrated command centers, intelligent traffic systems, and digital citizen services;

AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) – Targets improvement in basic urban infrastructure – water supply, sewerage, stormwater drainage, and non–motorized transport; Encourages reforms in urban planning and municipal finance;

Compendium of Urban Reforms (NIUA) – It is the best practices in financial management, e–governance, and pro–poor reforms. Promotes peer learning through the PEARL initiative under JnNURM.

Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) – Focuses on sanitation, waste management, and behavioral change; Introduced star rating protocols for garbage–free cities;

Ease of Living Index & Municipal Performance Index – Benchmarks cities on governance, quality of life, and sustainability; Encourages data–driven decision–making and citizen feedback loops

Annual Survey of India’s City–Systems (ASICS) – Tracks municipal performance and governance quality across cities.

Strengthening Urban Governance in India – Pathways to Reform

Administrative Autonomy – ULBs need to have full control over staff recruitment and management.

Democratic Strengthening – State governments must ensure regular municipal elections through empowered SECs.

Functional DPCs and MPCs – These bodies should be operationalized for integrated regional planning.

Fiscal Empowerment – SFCs should be constituted and implemented on time, ensuring predictable fiscal transfers.

Local Tax Reforms – Grant ULBs authority to assess and revise local taxes, improving revenue generation.

Conclusion

India’s urban future depends on revitalizing its Urban Local Bodies. Without real autonomy, both administrative and fiscal, cities will continue to struggle under weak governance and inadequate planning. Empowering ULBs through the faithful implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment is not merely a constitutional mandate — it is a developmental necessity. Through strong, accountable, and financially independent local institutions can India’s cities reclaim their promise as vibrant, productive, and livable spaces.

Source – https://www.business-standard.com/opinion/columns/india-s-urban-crisis-deepens-as-states-choke-city-level-governance-125102200921_1.html

Editorial of the Day – 25.10.2025

Index

1. The mirage of port-led development in Great Nicobar – (TH)

2. The other massive pendency in Indian courts –(IE)

1. The mirage of port-led development in Great Nicobar

General Studies 3 – Economy **Topic** – Infrastructure– Investment models in infrastructure.

1. Flawed Economic & Commercial Rationale

The project's fundamental economic assumptions are described as weak and untested.

Faulty Premise of Automatic Traffic – The core argument—that building large-scale port capacity will automatically attract shipping traffic—is misleading.

Supporting Precedent – The Vallarpadam Port in Kerala is cited as a key example where infrastructure investment alone did not guarantee commercial success or divert significant traffic.

Absence of Success Factors – Transshipment hubs do not succeed merely on infrastructure. They require a complex ecosystem that Nicobar lacks –

Network Connectivity – Dense feeder links to smaller ports.

Cargo Base – A strong industrial or manufacturing hinterland.

Carrier Loyalty – Long-term commitments from major shipping lines.

Critical Structural Deficit (No Hinterland) – The port suffers from a fatal flaw – the complete absence of an industrial or logistics base. With no local industry to anchor trade, every container must be imported and subsequently exported, making sustained growth difficult.

Geographical & Cost Disadvantage – The port's remoteness (1,200 km from the mainland) makes it logistically challenging and expensive. All essential supplies, from containers to personnel, must be shipped in, increasing operational costs. This isolation would disrupt established shipping schedules, discouraging major carriers from making it a regular stop.

Unrealistic Volume Targets – The claim that Nicobar (with no committed lines) could handle volumes doubling that of Colombo (which handles less than 8 million TEUs) is presented as highly implausible and lacking credibility.

2. Misplaced Strategic & National Imperatives

The strategic and national connectivity arguments are portrayed as impractical justifications.

Questionable Military Justification – The argument that a commercial port is needed for strategic military value is weak.

Existing Capabilities – The Indian Navy's INS Baaz already performs the necessary surveillance and deterrence roles in the region effectively.

Unclear Link – The necessity of a massive *commercial* port to achieve military objectives remains unproven, especially as China has not posed a direct naval threat in that specific area.

Lack of Transparency – The text suggests that if strategic aims are the true goal, they should be pursued openly rather than being "disguised as economic development."

Impractical "Maritime Arc" – The idea that Galathea Bay, Vizhinjam (Kerala), and Vadhavan (Maharashtra) will form a seamless national maritime network is dismissed as disregarding practical reality.

Different Economic Zones – These ports operate in distinct maritime zones with different economic drivers.

Independent Logic – Vizhinjam (proximity to sea lanes) and Vadhavan (strong industrial hinterland) have their own independent commercial logic.

Galathea's Isolation – Galathea Bay is isolated, lacks a cargo base, and is unsuitable to act as a central hub for a national network.

3. Disregard for Global Logistics & Market Realities

The project fails to account for the entrenched nature of the global shipping industry.

Entrenched Shipping Routes – Global carriers are highly resistant to altering established routes. Hubs like **Colombo and Singapore** are preferred because they offer integrated logistics, operational efficiency, and significant rebates.

India's Cost Disadvantage – Indian ports, despite investment, generally impose higher port-calling and handling charges, reducing their global competitiveness.

Cautionary Example (Krishnapatnam) – The withdrawal of all container services from Krishnapatnam Port in 2024 (shifting to bulk cargo) highlights that carriers prioritize cost and network integration above all else.

Misleading Comparison (Vizhinjam) – Vizhinjam's initial success is not a reliable model for Galathea Bay. Its traffic is dominated by a single company, MSC, which is also seeking an ownership stake in the terminal. The absence of commitments from other major carriers to move from Colombo reveals a structural weakness – success depends on long-term partnerships, not just one investor-carrier.

Galathea's Core Limitation – Being geographically isolated and logistically undeveloped, it cannot replicate the performance or ecosystem of mainland ports.

4. Conclusion – A Case of Overreach

Ambition vs. Practicality – The project reflects a disconnect between India's maritime ambitions and the "economic and logistical realities" of the shipping industry.

Risk of Failure – A world-class port without sufficient users or traffic will not enhance India's influence. Instead, it risks becoming a "cautionary tale of misplaced ambition."

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-mirage-of-port-led-development-in-great-nicobar/article70197906.ece>

2. The other massive pendency in Indian courts

General Studies 2 – Polity/Governance

Topic – Judiciary – Issues, Challenges, and Reforms.

1. The Core Problem – Execution Petitions

The Supreme Court flagged the delay in execution petitions as a critical failure of the justice system.

Definition – An execution petition is a legal step taken *after* a court issues a judgment (a decree) to enforce that judgment—for example, to recover money or property.

The "Weakest Link" – The process, which should be a simple procedural step, often drags on for years, becoming a significant bottleneck.

Systemic Failure – The SC views this delay not as an isolated issue but as a "symptom of a deeper malaise," highlighting that winning a case has become meaningless if the judgment cannot be implemented.

Statistical Evidence – Nearly one-third of all civil cases in district courts are execution petitions, underscoring that enforcement, not just judgment, is a primary cause of judicial backlog.

2. The Magnitude of Judicial Pendency

The article outlines the staggering scale of the backlog across the Indian judiciary.

Total Caseload – Over 5.3 crore cases are pending across all Indian courts (as of 2025, per NJDG).

Distribution of Pendency –

1. **Subordinate Courts** – ~4.4 crore cases
2. **High Courts** – ~60 lakh cases
3. **Supreme Court** – ~80,000 cases

Delayed Timeline – The average disposal time for cases ranges from 5 to 15 years, with some lasting over two decades.

3. Identified Causes of Pendency

The text identifies five primary drivers behind the chronic delays in the judicial system.

1. Vacancies and Infrastructure Deficits –

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

Judicial Shortage - A deficit of nearly 5,000 judges against a sanctioned strength of over 25,000.

Poor Ratio - The judge-to-population ratio is approximately 21 per million, far below the 1987 Law Commission recommendation of 50 per million.

2. Procedural Complexity - The system is burdened by frequent and unnecessary adjournments. Outdated procedures and bureaucratic delays (e.g., serving notices) stretch case timelines.

3. Poor Enforcement Mechanisms - This directly relates to the execution petition crisis. Enforcement requires coordination with other state bodies (police, revenue authorities), which introduces bureaucratic hurdles, delays, and potential corruption.

4. Government as the Largest Litigant - Government departments and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) are responsible for nearly 50% of all pending cases. This is often due to a policy of "mechanically" filing appeals without assessing their merit, choking the appellate courts.

5. Technological and Administrative Limitations - Despite the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, digital infrastructure and data integration are "uneven," particularly in lower courts, hindering efficiency gains.

4. Consequences of Pendency

The failure to deliver timely justice has wide-ranging negative impacts on society and the economy.

For Citizens - Causes immense emotional, financial, and psychological strain on litigants, forcing them to endure prolonged uncertainty.

For the Economy - Creates inefficiency in contract enforcement, a key metric that harmed India's rank in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index (2020). This uncertainty deters both domestic and foreign investment.

For the Judiciary and Governance - It erodes the moral authority of the judiciary and damages public faith in the rule of law. It directly contradicts the constitutional promise of "justice—social, economic and political" enshrined in the Preamble.

5. Solutions and Way Forward

The article collates both existing initiatives and necessary future steps to tackle the crisis.

Existing Judicial/Policy Initiatives -

Specialized Courts - Creation of Fast-track courts, Family courts, and Commercial courts to handle specific types of cases.

ADR - Promotion of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms like mediation, conciliation, and arbitration.

Infrastructure - The proposal for a National Judicial Infrastructure Authority (NJIA).

Technology - Adoption of virtual hearings, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommended Steps for Reform

Fill Vacancies - Prioritize recruitment, training, and retention of judges.

Specialized Enforcement - Establish "separate enforcement wings" in courts specifically to expedite execution petitions.

Institutional Reform - Implement the All India Judicial Service (AIJS) to ensure merit-based, uniform appointments.

Reduce Inflow - Actively promote ADR and Lok Adalats to resolve disputes *before* they enter the mainstream court system.

Accountability - Use the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) for data transparency and periodic judicial performance audits.

Empower Citizens - Promote public legal education to encourage early settlements.

Source - <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-law/pendency-courts-execution-petitions-supreme-court-data-10324597/>

Editorial of the Day – 28.10.2025

Index

1. A start for North-South carbon market cooperation – (TH)

2. The quiet art of coexistence – What North Block taught us about life, work, and animals – (IE)

1. A start for North-South carbon market cooperation – (TH)

General Studies 3 – Economy

Topic – Issues relating to mobilization of resources, growth, and development; Effects of liberalization on the economy.

Introduction

The European Union (EU) and India have announced a new strategic agenda. A key part of this agenda is a plan to connect India's new carbon market with the EU's climate change policy. The goal is to allow Indian exporters to deduct the carbon price they pay in India from the carbon tax they would have to pay at the EU border. This is seen as a major step, but it faces significant hurdles.

Key Terms Explained

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) – This is a carbon tariff (a tax on imports) implemented by the EU. It targets carbon-intensive goods (like steel, aluminum, cement) entering the EU.

Purpose – To prevent "carbon leakage," where EU companies might move to countries with weaker environmental laws.

Mechanism – If an Indian steel exporter wants to sell in the EU, the EU will check the carbon emissions used to make that steel. The exporter must pay a tax on those emissions *unless* they can prove they *already paid a carbon price* in India.

Indian Carbon Market (ICM) / Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS) – This is India's domestic "cap-and-trade" system.

Purpose – To put a price on carbon emissions and incentivize Indian industries to invest in cleaner technology.

Mechanism – The government sets a limit (a "cap") on emissions, and companies that emit less can sell their extra allowance (a "credit") to companies that emit more. This creates a market and a "carbon price."

EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) – This is the EU's own domestic carbon market. It is the world's oldest and largest, and its mechanisms are well-established. CBAM is designed to link directly to the price set by the EU ETS.

Absolute Cap vs. Intensity-Based – This is the most critical technical difference.

Absolute Cap (EU's model) – A hard limit on the *total amount* of emissions. For example, a factory is allowed 100 tonnes of CO₂ per period. This is what CBAM is based on.

Intensity-Based (India's current model) – A limit on emissions *per unit of production*. For example, a factory must reduce its emissions *per tonne of steel* produced. The factory could still *increase* its total emissions if it dramatically increases production. This model is not seen as equivalent by the EU.

North-South Cooperation – A term in international relations referring to cooperation between developed countries (the "Global North," like the EU) and developing countries (the "Global South," like India).

Linking India's Carbon Market (ICM) with the EU's CBAM

1. The Proposed Linkage & Potential Benefits

Core Agreement – As part of a new Strategic EU-India Agenda, the EU proposes to link its Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) with the Indian Carbon Market (ICM).

Mechanism – In principle, the carbon price paid by an Indian company under the domestic ICM would be deducted from the CBAM charges imposed when exporting goods to the EU.

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Primary Benefit (Exporters) – This linkage is intended to protect Indian exporters from "double taxation"—paying a carbon price twice, once in India (ICM) and again at the EU border (CBAM).

Secondary Benefit (Climate) – It could create a strong financial incentive for Indian industries to accelerate decarbonization and invest in cleaner production technologies to lower their domestic carbon costs.

Global Precedent – If successful, this would represent a breakthrough in "North-South" cooperation on carbon markets, setting a new model for climate and trade policy.

2. Challenge 1 – Structural & Institutional Gaps

Maturity Disparity – The EU's Emissions Trading System (ETS) is a mature, 20-year-old system with robust, tested mechanisms. India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS/ICM) is new, evolving, and institutionally weak.

Fundamental Accounting Mismatch – This is the biggest hurdle. CBAM is designed for a "tonne-for-tonne" accounting of emissions.

EU ETS – Based on absolute emission caps (a hard limit on total emissions).

Indian ICM – Currently based on intensity-based improvements (reducing emissions *per unit of product*). This is not compatible with CBAM's rules.

Lack of Trust & Verification – India's system currently lacks the robust institutional equivalents of the EU's independent verification bodies, cap-setting processes, and transparent emission registries.

Consequence – The EU is unlikely to recognize Indian carbon credits as equivalent or credible for deduction unless India undertakes a complete structural redesign of the ICM to match EU compliance standards (i.e., move to an absolute cap).

3. Challenge 2 – Carbon Price Disparity & Economic Risk

The Massive Price Gap – There is a huge disparity between the carbon prices in both markets, which reflects their different stages of development.

EU ETS Price – Approximately €60 – €80 per tonne.

Indian ICM Price – Estimated at a much lower €5 – €10 per tonne.

Ineffective Deduction – With this price gap, the deduction at the EU border would be minimal. Indian exporters would pay the small ICM tax and then still pay the vast majority of the CBAM levy, effectively facing the "double burden" the linkage was meant to prevent.

Domestic Political Risk – If Indian industries feel they are being taxed twice (even if one tax is small), they may lobby the Indian government to dilute or weaken the domestic ICM rules, which would further undermine its environmental credibility and its standing with the EU.

4. Challenge 3 – Political & Strategic Contradictions

The WTO Stance – India, alongside other developing countries, has formally opposed CBAM at the WTO and other global forums, labeling it a unilateral and protectionist trade barrier.

The Political Contradiction – By agreeing to link the ICM with CBAM, India is simultaneously contesting and cooperating with the same mechanism. This linkage politically legitimizes a system that India is officially protesting.

Sovereignty Concerns – The linkage effectively gives Brussels a say in India's domestic policy. The EU will be the ultimate judge of whether India's carbon price is "sufficient" for deductions. This represents a potential infringement on India's policy autonomy.

Trade Instability – Indian exporters become vulnerable to domestic policy shifts. If industry pressure forces India to roll back its ICM rules, exporters would immediately lose their (potential) deductions and face the full, uncapped CBAM levies at the EU border.

5. Conclusion & Way Forward

Symbolic vs. Real – The proposed linkage is a bold and significant symbolic step. However, it is hostage to major technical, financial, and political hurdles.

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Mutual Action Required – For this "breakthrough" to yield tangible benefits, a two-sided effort is essential

India's Role – Must undertake serious institutional reform to strengthen the ICM, ensure credible verification, and (most importantly) align its design with global standards (likely moving toward absolute caps).

EU's Role – Must provide technical support, clarity on equivalence, and potentially offer a transitional framework rather than a rigid, immediate pass/fail judgment.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-start-for-north-south-carbon-market-cooperation/article70209291.ece>

2. The quiet art of coexistence – What North Block taught us about life, work, and animals – (IE)

General Studies 4 – Ethics

Topic – Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration & Emotional Intelligence

1. Introduction – The Human Soul of Bureaucracy

Core Premise – The article is a reflective memoir by an IRS (Indian Revenue Service) officer, narrating her emotional farewell to North Block, one of India's most iconic administrative buildings.

Central Theme – It humanizes the often-impersonal image of bureaucracy by exploring the institutional soul, memory, and emotional dimensions of administrative life.

Key Focus – The narrative moves beyond the building's architecture to capture its role as a living ecosystem where humans, nature, and institutional culture coexist.

2. Architectural and Institutional Significance

Historical Context – North Block was designed by Herbert Baker (as part of the larger Lutyens' Delhi plan) and was completed in 1931 during the British Raj.

The Nerve Centre – It serves as the functional core of India's executive decision-making, housing key ministries including –

1. Ministry of Finance
2. Ministry of Home Affairs
3. Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)
4. Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)

Symbol of Continuity – The building symbolizes administrative continuity and institutional resilience, having remained the seat of India's financial governance from the colonial era through independence.

Architectural Heritage – The sandstone structure, with its grand domes, vaulted corridors, and courtyards, is a physical embodiment of India's bureaucratic heritage and a key part of the Lutyens' conservation zone.

3. The Human Dimension of Bureaucracy

Challenging Stereotypes – The author's reflections counter the stereotype of a detached, "mechanical" bureaucracy, showing it is inhabited by real people with attachments and shared experiences.

The Daily Rhythm of Life – The article personifies the building's routine, highlighting the different moods of the bureaucratic day –

Mornings – Brisk, purposeful, and energetic.

Afternoons – Quieter, more introspective, and reflective.

Evenings – Relaxed, as the workday winds down.

Emotional Connection – It emphasizes that officers form a deep sense of belonging. Their desks, corridors, and colleagues become integral parts of their professional identity and memory.

Informal Institutional Culture – The article notes the evolution of an unwritten culture built on mutual respect, silent cooperation, and personal bonds. This informal culture is crucial for maintaining morale within the rigid, formal administrative framework.

4. Coexistence with Nature – A Metaphor for Harmony

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A Striking Feature – A unique aspect of the narrative is the harmonious coexistence between officers and the animals (monkeys, cats, and dogs) that live within North Block.

Symbol of Mutual Understanding – This relationship was based on a mutual understanding, where each species respected the other's territory and rhythm.

Reflection of Indian Ethos – This living harmony is portrayed as a reflection of India's civilizational philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family), which extends empathy to all living beings.

Metaphorical Significance – The animals' persistence and adaptability serve as a metaphor for –

Resilience and Inclusivity – The ability of the system to accommodate diverse elements.

Organic Governance – The interaction of multiple, independent parts.

Balance – The coexistence represents the crucial balance between administrative order (discipline) and spontaneity (humanity).

5. Institutional Memory and Emotional Heritage

Beyond Brick and Mortar – The author stresses that North Block is not just a physical space but a repository of institutional memory. It carries the legacy of countless decisions, debates, and reforms that have shaped India.

Emotional Heritage – For the officers who served there, the building evokes nostalgia and represents years of dedication, service, and shared struggles.

Transition and Change (Central Vista) – The author's farewell is contextualized by the Central Vista Redevelopment Project, which is moving ministries to modern complexes. This symbolizes the emotional challenge of transitioning from heritage spaces that hold deep administrative identity.

Value of Continuity – The article underscores the importance of retaining the institutional *culture, ethics*, and *spirit* during such physical transitions to maintain administrative cohesion and morale.

6. Modernisation and Digital Transformation

The Old vs. The New – The narrative subtly contrasts the traditional "file rhythm" of paper-based bureaucracy with the new "digital rhythm" of modern systems.

Efficiency vs. The Human Touch – While acknowledging that technology brings efficiency and transparency, the author notes that the soul of bureaucracy lies in its human touch.

The "Indigitizable" Element – Relationships, shared experiences, mentorship, and informal networks that ensure smooth functioning cannot be fully digitized.

Humane Administrative Reform – The piece implies that administrative reforms must be humane, inclusive, and mindful of legacy systems and culture to ensure smooth adaptation by the personnel.

7. Ethical and Emotional Insights in Governance

The article provides several insights that are directly relevant to public administration ethics –

Empathy and Compassion – The care shown by officers for both animals and colleagues highlights the humane side of bureaucracy, a core civil service value.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) – It showcases EI in action – officers understanding institutional emotions, adapting to routines, and maintaining composure and patience under pressure.

Duty and Belonging – The deep sense of pride and belonging to the workplace is shown to reinforce commitment, accountability, and dedication to public service.

Balance of Formality and Humanity – It demonstrates that even within strict hierarchies, maintaining kindness, patience, and mutual respect is essential for strengthening institutional integrity.

Alignment with Foundational Values – These principles directly align with the Civil Services Values outlined in the Second ARC Report and the Code of Ethics (DoPT, 2014), such as integrity, compassion, and dedication.

8. Conclusion – Preserving the "Heart" of Governance

A Tribute – "Goodbye, North Block" is ultimately a tribute to the "soul" of India's civil service.

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The Core of Governance – It serves as a powerful reminder that governance is not merely about laws, data, and efficiency, but about human connections, empathy, and collective memory.

The Way Forward – As India's administration modernizes and relocates, the article concludes that preserving the institutional culture and ethical spirit embodied by North Block is essential for ensuring the "heart" of governance remains as strong as its new structures.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/north-block-rashtrapati-bhavan-kartavya-path-kartavya-bhavan-10329339/>



Editorial of the Day – 29.10.2025

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1. Relief, rehabilitation – On India's east coast and cyclones (TH)

2. Trump's visit to Asia – Flux in US-China ties has consequences for Asian nations (IE)

1. Relief, rehabilitation – On India's east coast and cyclones

General Studies 3 – Disaster Management

Topic – Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and

Response.

Cyclone Preparedness and Livelihood Challenges on India's Eastern Coast

1. Introduction – The Bay of Bengal Cyclone Dynamic

Core Context – The Bay of Bengal is notoriously known for spawning devastating cyclones, making India's eastern coastline highly vulnerable.

The Central Paradox – While India has achieved remarkable success in improving preparedness and early warning systems over the last two decades (largely preventing mass casualties), the socio-economic and livelihood impacts from these disasters remain a severe and persistent challenge.

Peak Vulnerability – The period of October and November is historically the most active and dangerous cyclone season for this region.

2. Historical Context and Cyclone Patterns

Peak Season – A clear pattern shows that 9 out of 12 major cyclones recorded between the 18th and 20th centuries occurred during October and November.

Benchmark Disasters – The high fatality rates of past cyclones serve as a stark reminder of the region's vulnerability –

1977 Severe Cyclone – Struck near Nizampatnam, Andhra Pradesh, causing approximately 10,000 fatalities.

1999 Super Cyclone – Made landfall near Paradip, Odisha, also resulting in approximately 10,000 fatalities.

3. Case Study – Cyclone Montha (October 2025)

Recent Event – A severe cyclonic storm that intensified on October 27–28, 2025.

Impact Regions – Affected Odisha, north coastal Andhra Pradesh, and adjoining areas of Tamil Nadu.

Specifically Affected Districts –

Andhra Pradesh – Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Srikakulam.

Odisha – Ganjam, Gajapati.

Evacuations – Demonstrated the current preparedness model, with 10,000+ people shifted from low-lying areas in Kakinada and Konaseema (Andhra Pradesh).

4. Improved Disaster Preparedness (The Success Story)

Systemic Improvement – Over the last two decades, Union and State governments have significantly enhanced early-warning systems and response mechanisms.

Tangible Result – The mass casualty events seen in 1977 and 1999 have been largely prevented.

State-Level Actions (Example – Cyclone Montha) –

Odisha – Deployed NDRF, issued a "Red Alert" for southern districts, and evacuated vulnerable zones.

Andhra Pradesh – Activated coastal monitoring, established shelter and relief camps, and ensured emergency food and power supplies.

5. The Persistent Challenge – Socio-Economic Impacts

Even with improved preparedness, the economic and livelihood losses continue to be severe and represent the next frontier of disaster management.

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Property Loss – Widespread damage to public infrastructure (roads, power lines, housing) and private property.

Livelihood Impact – The most severe losses are borne by the most vulnerable economic groups –
Fisherfolk (loss of boats, nets, and fishing days).
Farmers (crop inundation, soil salinity).
Daily-wage earners (loss of work).

Animal Losses – A critical but often under-reported economic blow.

Example – Cyclone Gaja (2018) caused massive losses of cattle, draught animals, and poultry in Nagapattinam and Thanjavur, devastating the local agrarian economy.

6. Mitigation Measures and Future Challenges

Measures Already Taken (Structural) –

Construction of multi-purpose cyclone shelters.
Building of embankments and coastal buffers.
Promotion of cyclone-resilient housing.

Measures Already Taken (Non-Structural) –

Advanced forecasting systems.
Community training and capacity building.
Regular mock drills.

The Key Challenge Ahead – The primary gap is no longer just in preparedness, but in ensuring on-ground efficiency during the relief and rehabilitation phases.

Role of Leadership – Political leaders must ensure that post-disaster support is impartial, inclusive, and reaches all affected communities without bias.

7. Conclusion – Redefining Resilience

The Paradigm Shift – India's cyclone management has successfully evolved, turning once-fatal storms into more manageable crises.

Beyond Survival – Resilience must be redefined to extend beyond mere survival.

The New Focus – The goal must now be to build robust systems for –

Restoring livelihoods quickly.
Protecting animal welfare (livestock).
Rebuilding community confidence and self-sufficiency.

Sustained Investment – Protecting vulnerable coastal populations requires sustained investment in local capacity building and long-term climate adaptation strategies.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/relief-rehabilitation-on-indias-east-coast-and-cyclones/article70212647.ece>

2. Trump's visit to Asia – Flux in US-China ties has consequences for Asian nations

General Studies 2 – International Relation

Topic – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Navigating the "Chimerica" Challenge – India's Foreign Policy

1. Introduction – The New Great Game

The relationship between the United States and China, once defined by deep economic interdependence ("Chimerica"), has fractured. This synergy, where China's manufacturing power complemented America's consumption-driven economy and shaped the global order for three decades, is now broken. It has been replaced by a "competitive coexistence" characterized by systemic rivalry, technology competition, and security anxieties. This recalibration is reshaping the global order, forcing Asian nations like India to navigate a complex geopolitical environment and adopt a proactive, pragmatic, and regionally anchored foreign policy.

2. The Flux in US-China Relations

The Fracture – The previous US-China synergy has dissolved due to growing distrust, competition over technology, and mutual security concerns.

US Policy Shift – The US now officially views China as a "systemic rival" rather than a partner.

US Policy Continuity – This adversarial stance has remained consistent across recent administrations, from President Trump's trade wars and tariffs to the Biden administration's technology restrictions and strengthening of security alliances.

China's Response – Under Xi Jinping, China has sought to strengthen its regional influence through economic diplomacy, notably the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Global Security Initiative.

Current State (2025) – The current dynamic is one of "competitive coexistence," marked by the US (under Trump) re-engaging allies like Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN, while simultaneously holding a limited détente with China.

3. Implications for Asia

Strategic Insecurity – Asian countries, especially middle powers, remain anxious about the oscillating US approach (swinging between confrontation and accommodation with China).

The Core Dilemma – Many regional economies are caught in a difficult position, dependent on both the US security umbrella and Chinese trade networks.

Indo-Pacific as the Theatre – The Indo-Pacific has emerged as the principal theatre for this rivalry.

US Counter-balancing – Washington's intent to counterbalance Beijing is illustrated by institutions like the QUAD, AUKUS, and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

A Key Vulnerability – The long-term sustainability of these US-led coalitions is questionable, as it depends on consistency in US policy, which has historically fluctuated with political changes in Washington.

4. India's Strategic Dilemma and Opportunity

A Dual-Edged Sword – The shifting US-China relationship presents both significant risks and new opportunities for India.

The Risk (Security Imperative) – As China deepens its assertiveness across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and in South Asia, India's cooperation with the US and its allies becomes strategically vital.

The Dilemma (Autonomy) – India must maintain its foreign policy autonomy and avoid being drawn into a zero-sum confrontation that would limit its flexibility and policy options.

The Opportunity (Proactive Regionalism) – India must move beyond reactive diplomacy and adopt a "proactive regionalism" by –

1. Engaging ASEAN, Africa, and the Indian Ocean littorals to shape the surrounding balance of power.
2. Strengthening its domestic economic resilience.
3. Expanding defence partnerships.
4. Investing in critical technology alliances.

5. Policy Recommendations for India

Strategic Balancing – Maintain close coordination with the US and QUAD members while simultaneously engaging in calibrated dialogue with China to prevent escalation.

Economic Diplomacy – Deepen participation in regional trade and technology frameworks to offset China's economic influence.

Maritime Strategy – Strengthen India's presence in the Indian Ocean and collaborate with ASEAN for a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).

Autonomous Foreign Policy – Uphold India's tradition of strategic autonomy by balancing ties with multiple poles of power, including the EU, Japan, and Russia.

Institutional Capacity – Build robust think tanks and policy institutions designed to anticipate shifts in great-power politics rather than merely respond to them.

6. Way Forward

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The Core Task – For India, the primary challenge is to navigate this geopolitical flux without compromising its sovereignty or regional leadership.

India's Role – As Asia becomes the principal stage for great-power competition, India's ability to combine prudence with initiative will determine its role in shaping the 21st-century balance of power.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/c-raja-mohan-writes-trumps-visit-to-asia-flux-in-us-china-ties-has-consequences-for-asian-nations-10332669/>



Editorial of the Day – 30.10.2025

Index

1. Federalism and funds – On Kerala and PM SHRI – (TH)

2. Foreign Capital and the Indian Banking Sector – (IE)

1. Federalism and funds – On Kerala and PM SHRI

General Studies 2 – Polity/Governance

Topic – Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

1. Introduction – The Federal Fault-line in Education

Core Issue – Kerala's unexpected decision to initially join the PM SHRI (Prime Minister Schools for Rising India) scheme, which is aligned with the NEP-2020, has ignited a significant political and administrative debate.

Central Conflict – The controversy highlights the delicate balance States must strike between accessing necessary central funds and preserving their federal autonomy in education policy.

Underlying Tension – This episode exposes the deep-rooted friction in India's Centre-State governance framework, particularly concerning education, a subject on the Concurrent List.

The Contradiction – The move was surprising because Kerala, along with Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, has been a vocal critic of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, citing ideological and federal concerns.

2. Background – Kerala's Controversial Decision

The Scheme – The PM SHRI scheme aims to upgrade and brand 14,500 schools across India as "model institutions" that will showcase the NEP-2020 vision.

The Surprise – Kerala's decision to join was shocking because it had consistently opposed the NEP-2020 on several grounds –

Encroachment on Federalism – Viewing the NEP as a centralizing policy that encroaches on State powers.

Ideological Concerns – Voicing fears that the policy could introduce communal bias and anti-scientific content into the curriculum.

3. Political & Administrative Controversy

Financial Coercion – Kerala's decision was reportedly driven by funding pressure. The Centre had allegedly withheld central funds due under the Samagra Shiksha (SS) scheme, linking their release to the adoption of NEP-linked schemes.

Internal Government Friction – The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Centre was signed without Cabinet approval, causing a significant dispute within the ruling LDF government.

Political Fallout – The CPI (a key coalition partner) demanded the immediate withdrawal of the decision. The CPI(M) defended the move as a pragmatic choice, necessary to secure funds for teacher salary arrears that were blocked by the Centre.

Current Status (Temporary Resolution) –

1. The implementation of PM SHRI in Kerala is currently frozen.
2. A Cabinet subcommittee has been formed to review the MoU and its implications.
3. Kerala will formally inform the Centre of this suspension pending the subcommittee's report.

4. Broader Context – Tamil Nadu's Legal Challenge

A Parallel Struggle – This situation mirrors the actions of Tamil Nadu, which also faced the withholding of Samagra Shiksha (SS) funds for refusing to adopt the PM SHRI scheme.

Different Response – Unlike Kerala's internal review, Tamil Nadu escalated the issue by approaching the Supreme Court, challenging the Centre's right to link statutory funds to a conditional scheme.

5. Kerala's Educational Prowess (The Irony)

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Exceeding Benchmarks – The core irony is that Kerala's existing state education system already outperforms many of the key benchmarks set by the NEP-2020.

Key Strengths – The state boasts near-universal Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), high student retention rates, superior learning outcomes, and strong infrastructure, including widespread digital access.

A "Cosmetic Exercise" – Consequently, for Kerala, joining PM SHRI is seen as a purely cosmetic exercise—merely "rebranding" its existing high-performing schools rather than undertaking any genuine reform.

6. Core Issue – Federalism and Conditional Funding

Erosion of Cooperative Federalism – The Centre's tactic of withholding legitimate funds (like those for Samagra Shiksha) to compel States to adopt a central scheme (PM SHRI) is seen as a direct assault on the principles of cooperative federalism.

Forced Compliance – PM SHRI implementation mandates compliance with specific NEP-2020 features, including the controversial "Indian Knowledge Systems," which critics fear is a vehicle for pseudoscience.

Autonomy as a Bargaining Chip – This approach effectively reduces state autonomy to a bargaining chip for accessing central funds, which rightfully belong to the states as part of the financial architecture.

Role of Judiciary – The article emphasizes that the judiciary, as the guardian of India's federal structure, must intervene to ensure this power dynamic is not abused.

7. Conclusion and Way Forward

A Case Study in Tension – Kerala's brief alignment and subsequent pause on the PM SHRI scheme perfectly encapsulates the tension between state autonomy and central conditionalities in national education policy.

Responsibility of the Centre – The Centre must respect federal principles and refrain from using financial leverage to force ideological or policy alignment.

Legal Recourse for States – States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu should explore legal avenues (following Tamil Nadu's lead) to safeguard their rightful share of education funds *without* having to compromise their policy independence or the scientific integrity of their curriculum.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/federalism-and-funds-on-kerala-and-pm-shri/article70217227.ece>

2. Foreign Capital and the Indian Banking Sector

General Studies 3 – Economy Topic – Financial Sector and Banking Reforms – (Specifically, issues of capital adequacy, competition, and FDI)

1. Introduction – The Need for Foreign Capital

Critical Driver of Growth – Foreign capital has long been a critical driver for emerging economies, and India is no exception.

Context of Liberalization – As India steadily liberalizes its financial sector, foreign investment in banks has become a vital component of its economic strategy.

Core Objectives – This investment is crucial for strengthening capital adequacy (meeting regulatory norms), fostering healthy competition, and deepening financial inclusion.

2. Evolution of Foreign Investment in Indian Banking

Pre-1991 (Regulated Era) – The banking sector was tightly regulated and dominated by Public Sector Banks (PSBs) following the nationalizations of 1969 and 1980. There was little to no foreign presence.

Post-1991 (Liberalization) – The economic reforms of 1991 opened up the financial services sector to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) permitted foreign banks to operate through branches and subsidiaries, subject to specific licensing norms.

Recent Trends – Over the last two decades, foreign investors have increasingly infused capital into **private sector banks** through strategic stakes, portfolio investments, and partnerships. This reflects growing global confidence in India's banking growth story.

3. Advantages of Foreign Capital

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Strengthens Capital Base – Foreign capital supplements domestic resources, which is essential for Indian banks (especially private ones) to meet stringent Basel III capital adequacy norms and expand their credit portfolios. This also reduces the fiscal pressure on the government, which would otherwise need to fund PSB recapitalization.

Technology & Expertise Transfer – International banks and investors bring advanced technology, sophisticated risk management practices, global banking expertise, and new product innovations, thereby modernizing India's entire financial ecosystem.

Supports Financial Inclusion – Aligns with India's policy goals (like the Jan Dhan Yojana) by providing banks with the capital needed to expand their outreach, invest in digital banking infrastructure, and offer innovative products to unbanked and underbanked populations.

Global Integration – This investment links the Indian banking sector to global capital markets, improving its overall competitiveness and creating new opportunities for cross-border financial synergies.

4. Recent Trends – Rising Investments in India

Strong Market Appeal – Recent years have seen significant interest from global financial giants, highlighting India's appeal as one of the fastest-growing banking markets in the world.

Key Investors –

Singaporean Funds – GIC, Temasek, and Fullerton have invested billions in top-tier private banks like HDFC, Kotak Mahindra, and Axis Bank.

Sovereign Wealth & Pension Funds – Canadian funds (CPPIB, CDPQ) and sovereign wealth funds from Abu Dhabi and Qatar have acquired long-term stakes.

US Private Equity – Firms such as Warburg Pincus, Carlyle, and Blackstone have infused significant capital into both Indian banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).

European Players – Zurich Insurance and HSBC have also strengthened their presence and investments.

5. Challenges and Risks of Foreign Investments

Regulatory Concerns & National Interest – The RBI imposes caps on foreign ownership (74% in private banks, 20% in PSU banks) to ensure a balance between attracting capital and safeguarding national interests and financial stability.

Dependence on Global Markets – Excessive reliance on foreign capital can expose the Indian banking sector to global shocks. This includes volatility from international interest rate changes, currency fluctuations, or sudden geopolitical tensions.

Profit Repatriation – A large foreign shareholding can lead to significant profit repatriation (dividends) flowing out of the country, potentially reducing the funds available for domestic reinvestment and creating a tension between development priorities and investor interests.

Concentration of Ownership – Heavy dependence on a few large sovereign wealth or pension funds could reduce the diversity of stakeholders. This makes banks vulnerable if one or two major investors decide on a sudden exit, which could destabilize the bank.

Creating a Level Playing Field – Public Sector Banks (PSBs), often burdened with legacy Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) and lower operational autonomy, may find it difficult to compete with agile, foreign-capital-backed private banks.

6. Policy Reforms Needed to Optimize Investments

Balanced Liberalization – India must maintain its cautious and balanced regulatory framework—continuing liberalization while implementing safeguards to prevent destabilizing ownership patterns.

Strengthening Domestic Savings – Policies must also focus on encouraging greater domestic capital infusion (from retail and institutional investors) into banks to reduce overdependence on foreign funds.

Channelizing Investment – Foreign investments should be strategically channeled into high-priority areas like fintech, AI-driven banking, and sustainable (Green) finance to accelerate modernization.

Level Support for PSBs – To ensure healthy competition, it is vital to continue recapitalization and governance reforms in Public Sector Banks, making them more competitive.

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7. Way Forward – An Opportunity and a Responsibility

A Dual View – Foreign capital in Indian banks represents both a significant opportunity for growth and a serious responsibility for regulators.

Positive Impact – It has been a key enabler in making the Indian banking sector more globally competitive, capital-strong, and technologically advanced.

Regulatory Vigilance – Regulators must remain vigilant to protect financial sovereignty, maintain systemic stability, and ensure that the benefits of this foreign capital contribute to inclusive growth for the entire economy.

Source – OCTOBER 30TH INDIAN EXPRESS



Editorial of the Day – 31.10.2025

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1. Out of the fortress – On protecting India 's tigers- (TH)

2. Don't Rely on The Heavens – (IE)

1. Out of the fortress – On protecting India 's tigers- (TH)

General Studies 3 – Environment

Topic – environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment. Wildlife conservation and related policies (e.g., Project Tiger).

A New Conservation Model ("Out of the Fortress")

1. Introduction – A Progressive Shift in Conservation

Core Concept – The new policy from the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry marks a progressive shift in India's conservation strategy, moving away from an exclusionary "fortress" model.

Redefining Conservation – It redefines conservation as a "social contract" between people and nature, rather than a system that pits them against each other.

Upholding Legal Rights – The policy strongly reaffirms the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, emphasizing that forest dwellers are stakeholders, not trespassers.

Central Theme – The new approach promotes coexistence over exclusion, seeking to align ecological protection with social justice and active community participation.

2. Key Features – People and Tigers as Partners

Reversing the 2024 NTCA Directive – The policy acts as a corrective, reversing a 2024 National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) directive that had sought mass village relocations from tiger habitats.

Promoting Co-habitation – It actively promotes new research and pilot projects aimed at creating sustainable models for the co-habitation of humans and tigers.

Collaborative Model – This redefines conservation as a collaborative and resilient model, rather than one that relies on the forced separation of humans and wildlife.

3. Rights and Redress Mechanisms

The new framework is built on a strong foundation of legal safeguards to protect tribal and forest-dwelling communities –

Primacy of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 – The policy mandates that no forest dwellers can be relocated until the procedures laid out in the FRA are legally completed and their rights are settled. This prevents forced relocations.

Protection via SC/ST Act – It strategically invokes the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act as a legal shield. This measure aims to safeguard communities against unlawful evictions and holds authorities accountable for violations.

Three-Tier Grievance Redress System – A new three-tier system is proposed to address grievances, ensuring that communities have a legal safety net and a mechanism for participation—elements often missing in previous relocation programs.

4. The Central Dilemma – Balancing Conservation and Development

Diverse Community Aspirations – The policy acknowledges that forest communities are not uniform. Some desire access to modern education and healthcare, while others wish to preserve their traditional lifestyles.

The Conservationist Viewpoint – This must be balanced against the established ecological science, which emphasizes that human-free core zones are vital for the long-term protection and breeding of tigers.

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Balancing Act – The national mission must, therefore, maintain scientific rigor in conservation while simultaneously respecting and upholding community rights.

5. Implementation Challenges Ahead

Local Complexity vs. Central Control – Top-level ministries in Delhi cannot effectively manage the complex local realities of conservation. The policy's success will depend on creating "fine-grained local mechanisms" for implementation.

Inter-Departmental Friction – The Forest Departments and the Environment Ministry still dominate conservation policy. Resistance is expected from this "conservation establishment," which may fear that a rights-based approach will –

1. Slow down the consolidation of habitats.
2. Increase the administrative burden.

Inconsistent FRA Implementation – States have shown significant variation in their willingness and ability to implement the Forest Rights Act, posing a major hurdle to the policy's uniform application.

6. The "Middle Path" (The Stated Goal)

A Dual Mandate – The policy aims for a balanced "middle path" that protects both ecology and human rights.

A Critical Warning – It cautions that transitioning from the fortress model must not lead to unchecked human activity within critical core tiger zones.

The Ideal Framework – The ultimate goal is to create a coexistence framework that is –

1. **Socially Legitimate** – (Respected and supported by local communities).
2. **Ecologically Sound** – (Based on scientific evidence for tiger protection).
3. **Regionally Adaptive** – (Flexible enough to suit different local contexts).

7. Conclusion – A Future of Coexistence

Ecology and Dignity – India's conservation journey must find a way to balance ecological integrity with human dignity.

A Corrective Step – This new framework, with its focus on rights-based conservation and community-led coexistence, is a significant corrective to the failures of the fortress model.

Conditions for Success – Its success is not guaranteed. It depends entirely on effective local implementation, strict scientific oversight, and genuine cooperation from State governments.

Ultimate Vision – The policy aims for a sustainable future where both tigers and tribal communities can thrive as equal partners.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/out-of-the-fortress-on-protecting-indias-tigers/article70221403.ece>

2. Don't Rely on The Heavens – (IE)

General Studies 3 – Environment

Topic – Conservation, environmental pollution and

degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Air Pollution and the Fallacy of Artificial Rain

1. Introduction – A Crisis and a "Desperate Measure"

Core Context – The recurring and severe menace of air pollution in India, particularly in the National Capital Region (NCR), has reached critical levels.

Policy Consideration – This crisis has forced policymakers to consider desperate, short-term measures, including artificial rain (cloud seeding).

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Article's Stance – The idea of inducing rainfall to "wash away" particulate matter, while seemingly innovative, is a flawed approach that raises serious concerns about its sustainability, feasibility, and long-term effectiveness.

2. Understanding Artificial Rain (Cloud Seeding)

The Mechanism – Artificial rain is a weather modification technique. It involves dispersing substances like silver iodide, potassium iodide, or dry ice into existing clouds to act as condensation nuclei and induce precipitation.

Global Use – This technique has been employed in countries like China and the UAE, primarily to augment rainfall in arid regions.

Critical Dependency – The success of cloud seeding is not guaranteed. It depends heavily on specific meteorological conditions, most importantly the presence of moisture-bearing clouds.

The Indian Feasibility Challenge – In India, the peak pollution season (winter) often coincides with dry weather conditions and a lack of suitable clouds. Limited experiments by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and the IMD in Maharashtra and Karnataka have yielded inconsistent outcomes—ranging from negligible rainfall to only moderate success.

Conclusion on Efficacy – This high dependency on variable weather and inconsistent results underscores that cloud seeding cannot be a reliable or scalable solution for air pollution.

3. Why Artificial Rain is a Short-Sighted Measure

Temporary Relief – Even if artificial rain is successfully induced, the relief it provides from air pollution is **purely temporary**. Rain *can* help settle particulate matter (PM 2.5, PM 10) and reduce high Air Quality Index (AQI) levels for a few days.

The Rebound Effect – Pollution levels rebound very quickly once the primary emission sources—such as vehicles, construction, stubble burning, and industries—resume their activity.

High Cost & Diversion – The process involves high logistical and financial costs, requiring aircraft or drones for seeding. This diverts crucial funds, attention, and resources away from sustainable, long-term interventions.

4. The Real Solution – Structural and Policy Reforms

The article argues that India's pollution crisis demands systematic reforms, not unpredictable weather interventions.

1. Emission Control – Strengthen the enforcement of existing emission norms under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). Accelerate the transition to cleaner fuels (e.g., CNG, Hydrogen) and electric mobility.

2. Stubble Management – Move beyond punitive actions and provide viable economic incentives and technological alternatives (e.g., ex-situ/in-situ management) for farmers to stop crop residue burning.

3. Sustainable Urban Planning – Increase the green cover (urban forests) to act as natural carbon sinks. Improve municipal solid waste management to prevent open waste burning. Create buffer zones to separate industrial and residential areas.

4. Public Awareness – Promote behavioral changes, such as reduced reliance on personal vehicles and the adoption of energy-efficient appliances.

5. Technological and Governance Solutions

Data-Driven Policy – Invest in real-time air quality monitoring systems, predictive modelling, and data-driven urban policies.

Improved Coordination – Use data to enhance accountability and coordination among Central, State, and local authorities (e.g., the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR).

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Economic Instruments – Aggressively promote renewable energy to reduce dependence on coal-fired power plants. Strictly enforce pollution taxes ("polluter pays" principle) on industries.

6. Way Forward – Rely on Science, Not "The Heavens"

Rejecting Quick Fixes – The reliance on concepts like artificial rain reflects a dangerous tendency to seek "quick fixes" while avoiding the difficult task of addressing systemic flaws.

The Real Path – India must "rely on the heavens" but instead rely on science, strong governance, and public participation to secure clean air.

Lasting Solution – The only viable path toward long-term environmental health and resilience lies in sustainable urban development, strict regulatory enforcement, and regional cooperation (to manage trans-boundary pollution).

Source – <https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-indian-express/20251031/281844354878393?srltid=AfmBOop8f9oBP55X0vZW89gz28Zy4gy5YkgscGsp08k8eOUWLX0JNHN>

