# P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

**Building Bureaucrats Since 2006**

## Editorial of the Day – 11.03.2026

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## 1. Catch Them Young (TH)

**General Studies Paper:** GS II (Governance & Social Justice)

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

**Sub-Topic:** Public Health, Child Nutrition, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), and Regulatory Policies.

### 1. Introduction

The phrase "Catch them young" has traditionally been associated with skill development, but in 2026, it serves as a grim warning for public health. India is witnessing a staggering rise in childhood obesity, driven by a transition toward sedentary lifestyles and ultra-processed diets. This trend is not merely a cosmetic concern but a precursor to a lifelong struggle with chronic, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), necessitating immediate policy and social interventions.

### 2. Scale of the Problem: A Statistical Overview

1. **Current Status (2025-26):** According to the World Obesity Atlas 2026, India is home to 14.9 million overweight/obese children in the 5–9 age group and 26.4 million in the 10–19 age group.
2. **High BMI Prevalence:** Approximately 41 million children currently have a high Body Mass Index (BMI).
3. **Future Projections (2040):** The numbers are set to explode, with an estimated 20 million obese and 56 million overweight children in India by 2040.
4. **The Looming NCD Crisis:** Nearly 120 million school-age children are at risk of developing early markers of hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.

### 3. Global Context: India as a Leading Contender

1. **Global Ranking:** India currently ranks second globally in the number of children with high BMI, trailing only behind China (62 million) and followed by the United States (27 million).
2. **Economic Shift:** The crisis has shifted from high-income countries to low- and middle-income countries like India, where "over-nutrition" now coexists with "under-nutrition."

### 4. Health Consequences: Beyond the Weight

Childhood obesity triggers a cascade of metabolic dysfunctions previously seen only in adults:

1. **Metabolic Disorders:** High BMI is directly linked to diabetes, hyperglycemia, and elevated cholesterol.
2. **Liver Health:** A rising number of children are being diagnosed with Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD).
3. **Chronic Conditions:** Early-onset hypertension and vascular aging are becoming increasingly common among adolescents.

### 5. Key Causes and Risk Factors

The crisis is multi-factorial, rooted in both individual behavior and the environment:

1. **Dietary Transition:** High consumption of ultra-processed foods (UPF) and sugary beverages.
2. **Lifestyle Factors:** Increased screen time and sedentary behavior, often at the cost of outdoor play.
3. **Nutritional Gaps:** Insufficient breastfeeding (especially in the first 5 months) and poor-quality school meals.
4. **School Environment:** Limited emphasis on physical activity and easy access to junk food in and around school premises.

## 6. Needed Policy and Social Interventions

1. **Marketing Restrictions:** Stricter regulations on how packaged and junk foods are marketed to children.
2. **Fiscal Measures:** Implementing sugar levies and taxes on unhealthy food products to discourage consumption.
3. **School Reforms:** Mandatory standards for healthy school meals and a minimum requirement for physical activity.
4. **Primary Healthcare Integration:** Embedding obesity prevention and treatment into the primary healthcare system to ensure early detection.
5. **Early-Life Support:** Promoting and supporting mandatory breastfeeding practices for optimal early-childhood nutrition.

## 7. Conclusion

The childhood obesity crisis in India is a major roadblock to achieving long-term demographic and economic potential. Addressing this issue early is not just a health imperative but a socio-economic necessity. Without a robust, multi-sectoral strategy involving parents, schools, and the government, the future generation will bear the heavy cost of a largely preventable crisis.

**Source:** [https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/catch-them-young-on-overweight-or-obese-children-in-india/article70727136.ece#google_vignette](https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/catch-them-young-on-overweight-or-obese-children-in-india/article70727136.ece#google_vignette)

**QUESTION**

**"The rapid surge in childhood obesity in India signifies a shift in the nature of the country's public health challenges. Elucidate the socio-economic drivers of this trend and suggest a multi-pronged regulatory framework to 'catch them young' and safeguard future human capital." (250 Words, 15 Marks)**

## 1. Introduction

With over 41 million children suffering from high BMI, India ranks second globally in childhood obesity. This "Nutritional Transition" from under-nutrition to over-nutrition indicates that obesity is no longer a disease of the affluent but a systemic public health challenge affecting the nation's future productivity.

## 2. Socio-Economic Drivers of the Trend

1. **Environmental Shift:** The "obesogenic environment" is characterized by the easy availability of low-cost, calorie-dense, ultra-processed foods.
2. **Lifestyle Changes:** Rapid urbanization has led to reduced physical spaces for play and a surge in sedentary behaviors, amplified by "screen exposure."
3. **Economic Pressures:** Working parents often rely on convenient, processed meals, while poor early-life nutrition (insufficient breastfeeding) predisposes children to metabolic disorders.
4. **Lack of Awareness:** Misconceptions regarding "chubby children" being healthy often delay early intervention.

## 3. Multi-Pronged Regulatory Framework

1. **Nutritional Labeling (Front-of-Pack):** Implementing "traffic-light" labeling to clearly identify high-fat, sugar, and salt (HFSS) content.
2. **Fiscal Policy:** Introducing a "Sin Tax" on sugar-sweetened beverages and subsidizing fresh produce to alter consumption patterns.
3. **Institutional Intervention:** Banning the sale and advertisement of junk food within 100 meters of schools and making "Physical Education" a core, graded subject.
4. **Public Health Integration:** Utilizing the POSHAN Abhiyaan framework to include obesity monitoring alongside traditional malnutrition metrics.

## 4. Conclusion

Childhood obesity is a precursor to a lifetime of NCDs, which can derail India's "demographic dividend." A robust regulatory framework that combines behavioral change with strict corporate accountability is essential to "catch them young" and ensure a healthy, productive future for the nation.

**Source:** https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/catch-them-young-on-overweight-or-obese-children-in-india/article70727136.ece#google_vignette

## 2. The Election Commission of India (ECI) (IE)

**General Studies Paper:** GS II (Governance & Constitution)

**Topic:** Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

**Sub-Topic:** Removal of Constitutional Authorities, Independence of Election Commission, and Article 324.

### 1. Introduction

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is a permanent, independent constitutional body established to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections. Given its role in managing the world's largest democratic exercise involving over 970 million voters, the Constitution provides the Chief Election Commissioner with a security of tenure similar to that of a Supreme Court judge. This stringent removal process ensures that the head of the ECI remains shielded from executive interference and political vendetta.

### 2. Constitutional Status of the ECI

1. **Article 324:** Vests the "superintendence, direction, and control" of elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the ECI.
2. **Independent Authority:** Designed as a watchdog of democracy to prevent partisan influence in electoral administration.
3. **Composition:** Consists of the CEC and other Election Commissioners (ECs) as determined by the President.
4. **Tenure:** Six years or until the age of 65, ensuring administrative stability.

### 3. Constitutional Safeguards for the CEC

1. **Security of Tenure:** Under Article 324(5), the CEC cannot be removed from office except in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.
2. **Executive Protection:** Unlike the other Election Commissioners, who can be removed on the recommendation of the CEC, the CEC himself cannot be dismissed by the President at will.
3. **Impartiality:** These safeguards are comparable to those for the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and Supreme Court Judges, reinforcing the CEC's role as a neutral arbiter.

### 4. The Legal Framework for Removal

The removal process is governed by a combination of constitutional provisions and parliamentary law:

1. **Article 324(5) & Article 124(4):** These articles link the CEC's removal to the judicial impeachment process.
2. **Grounds for Removal:** The Constitution specifies only two grounds: "Proved misbehaviour" or "Incapacity."
3. **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968:** This Act details the exact investigation and parliamentary procedures required for the motion.
4. **2023 Election Commission Act:** The *Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023* reaffirms these constitutional protections.

### 5. Detailed Parliamentary Procedure for Removal

The process is notoriously difficult, designed to prevent arbitrary removal:

**Step 1: Initiation of the Motion-** A notice of the motion must be signed by at least 100 members of the Lok Sabha OR 50 members of the Rajya Sabha.

**Step 2: Admission by Presiding Officer-** The Speaker (Lok Sabha) or Chairman (Rajya Sabha) has the discretion to admit or refuse the motion.

**Step 3: Constitution of an Inquiry Committee**

If admitted, a three-member committee is formed, consisting of:

1. A Supreme Court Judge.
2. A Chief Justice of a High Court.
3. A distinguished jurist.

**Step 4: Investigation & Voting**

1. **Report:** The committee investigates the charges. If they find the CEC guilty of misbehaviour or incapacity, the report is tabled in Parliament.
2. **Special Majority:** Each House must pass the motion by a Special Majority:
    1. A majority of the total membership of that House.
    2. A majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting.

**Step 5: Presidential Order-** Once both Houses pass the motion in the same session, an address is presented to the President, who then issues the order of removal.

## 6. Conclusion

The stringent "impeachment-style" removal process for the CEC is a testament to the importance of electoral independence in India. While the mechanism allows for accountability in cases of proven misconduct, it ensures that the office remains a bastion of neutrality. Preserving the credibility of the ECI is fundamental to maintaining public trust in the democratic transfer of power and India's standing as a global benchmark for electoral management.

**Source: https://indianexpress.com/article/upsc-current-affairs/upsc-key-impeaching-cec-essential-commodities-act-patent-10576879/**

**QUESTION**

**"The constitutional independence of the Election Commission is a prerequisite for a thriving democracy. In light of recent developments, elaborate on the procedural safeguards provided to the Chief Election Commissioner and discuss why a stringent removal process is essential for institutional autonomy." (250 Words, 15 Marks)**

## 1. Introduction

The Election Commission of India (ECI), under Article 324, is the bedrock of the country's democratic process. To ensure its impartiality, the Constitution provides the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) with robust security of tenure, making their removal a matter of high parliamentary threshold rather than executive discretion.

## 2. Procedural Safeguards

1. **Equivalence to Judiciary:** Article 324(5) mandates that the CEC can only be removed in the same manner as a Supreme Court Judge (under Article 124(4)).
2. **Limited Grounds:** Removal is restricted to "proved misbehaviour or incapacity," preventing politically motivated dismissals.
3. **Parliamentary Barrier:** The process requires a Special Majority in both Houses—a feat rarely achieved without broad bipartisan consensus.
4. **Investigative Rigour:** The Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, ensures that charges are first vetted by a judicial committee before a vote is even cast.

## 3. Importance of a Stringent Removal Process

1. **Insulation from Executive Pressure:** If the CEC served at the pleasure of the President (the Executive), the ruling party could potentially influence election scheduling or conduct.
2. **Neutrality of the Arbiter:** The CEC often has to make tough calls against high-ranking political figures. The security of tenure allows them to perform their duty "without fear or favour."

3. **Public Trust:** A robust process ensures the public that the "referee" of the electoral game cannot be easily intimidated, thereby legitimizing the democratic outcome.
4. **Stability of the Institution:** It prevents frequent leadership changes that could lead to administrative paralysis in the world's most complex electoral ecosystem.

### 4. Conclusion

While accountability is necessary, the high bar for the removal of the CEC is a deliberate constitutional design to safeguard the soul of Indian democracy—free and fair elections. Any move to initiate this process must therefore be grounded in substantial evidence of "proved misbehaviour" to maintain the sanctity of this constitutional office.

**Source:** https://indianexpress.com/article/upsc-current-affairs/upsc-key-impeaching-cec-essential-commodities-act-patent-10576879/

## 3. Paradigm Shift in Trade Facilitation (BUSINESS LINE)

**General Studies Paper:** General Studies Paper III – Indian Economy
**Topic:** Infrastructure and logistics development.
**Sub-Topic:** Digital governance and technology-driven reforms

### Introduction

Efficient trade facilitation is essential for improving a country's global competitiveness and boosting economic growth. India has been working to modernise its trade ecosystem through digitalisation, customs reforms, and logistics improvements. Recent initiatives in digital trade facilitation aim to simplify procedures, reduce delays, and create a more efficient system for exports and imports.

### 1. Challenges in India's Traditional Trade Processes

1. Historically, India's trade processes involved complex documentation, manual inspections, and multiple regulatory approvals.
2. Exporters and importers often had to deal with lengthy customs procedures and compliance requirements.
3. These inefficiencies increased transaction costs, delays, and logistics bottlenecks.

### 2. Digital Trade Facilitation Initiatives

1. The proposed Digital Trade Facilitation Bill, 2026 aims to recognise digital records as legally valid for trade documentation.
2. Digital documentation can reduce reliance on paper-based processes and physical verification.
3. Such reforms improve transparency, efficiency, and ease of compliance for businesses.

### 3. Customs Reforms and Technological Integration

1. Customs systems are being upgraded with digital platforms and automated clearance mechanisms.
2. Initiatives such as faceless assessment and electronic documentation reduce human intervention and improve efficiency.
3. Advanced technologies such as AI-driven risk assessment and X-ray scanning systems help identify high-risk consignments more effectively.

### 4. 'Scan Every Container' Initiative

1. The proposed system aims to digitally scan cargo containers to detect irregularities.
2. Automated scanning reduces the need for manual inspection and physical handling of containers.
3. This helps minimise delays, improve security, and reduce potential damage to goods.

### 5. Role of Authorised Economic Operators (AEO)

1. The AEO programme recognises trusted exporters and importers who comply with high security and compliance standards.
2. Certified operators receive benefits such as faster clearance and reduced inspections.

3. This improves efficiency in the movement of goods and enhances supply chain reliability.

### 6. Economic Benefits of Trade Facilitation Reforms

1. Faster cargo clearance can significantly reduce logistics costs and port congestion.
2. Digital systems improve transparency and reduce corruption risks.
3. Efficient trade processes strengthen India's position in global value chains and international trade networks.

### Conclusion

Digital trade facilitation and customs reforms represent an important step toward modernising India's trade infrastructure. By leveraging technology and simplifying regulatory procedures, India can improve its ease of doing business, enhance export competitiveness, and integrate more effectively into the global trading system.

**Source:** https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/paradigm-shift-in-trade-facilitation/article70727645.ece

**UPSC Mains Practice Question**

**Q. Digitalisation of trade processes can significantly improve efficiency and competitiveness in international trade. Discuss the role of digital trade facilitation and customs reforms in strengthening India's trade ecosystem. (250 words)**

### Introduction

Trade facilitation refers to measures that simplify and streamline international trade procedures, documentation, and customs clearance processes. With increasing global trade and complex supply chains, digitalisation has become an essential tool for improving efficiency and competitiveness.

### Role of Digital Trade Facilitation

**1. Simplification of Trade Procedures-** Digital records reduce dependence on paper-based documentation and manual approvals.

**2. Faster Customs Clearance-** Automated systems and faceless assessment enable quicker processing of export and import consignments.

**3. Improved Transparency-** Digital platforms reduce human intervention and minimise corruption and administrative delays.

**4. Strengthening Supply Chains-** Efficient trade processes help integrate India more effectively into global value chains.

### Role of Customs Reforms

**1. Risk-Based Inspection-** Technology such as AI-driven risk assessment and scanning systems helps identify suspicious consignments.

**2. Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme-** Trusted traders receive priority clearance and reduced inspections, improving efficiency.

### Conclusion

Digital trade facilitation and customs reforms are crucial for enhancing India's global trade competitiveness. By leveraging technology and improving logistics systems, India can reduce trade costs, boost exports, and strengthen its integration with the global economy.

**Source:** https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/paradigm-shift-in-trade-facilitation/article70727645.ece

## 4. Hormuz And Other Chokepoints Are Forcing Big Shifts in Strategy (MINT)

**General Studies Paper:** General Studies Paper II – International Relations

**Topic:** Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

**Sub-Topic:** Important international institutions, agencies and global supply chains

### Introduction

Global trade and energy supply depend heavily on a few critical maritime chokepoints and strategic trade routes. Disruptions in these chokepoints can significantly affect global supply chains, energy markets, and economic stability. Recent geopolitical tensions highlight how control over such strategic locations has become increasingly important in international politics.

## 1. Importance of Strategic Chokepoints

1. Strategic chokepoints are narrow geographic passages through which major volumes of global trade and energy supplies pass.
2. Examples include the Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Malacca, Suez Canal, and Bab-el-Mandeb.
3. Any disruption in these routes can affect global energy prices and trade flows.

## 2. Interdependence in the Global Economy

1. Modern economies are deeply interconnected through global supply chains and trade networks.
2. Energy imports, industrial inputs, and technology components often move through critical maritime routes.
3. Disruptions in one region can therefore trigger global economic consequences.

## 3. Rising Geopolitical Competition

1. Increasing geopolitical rivalry has intensified competition over strategic trade routes and technological supply chains.
2. Major powers are attempting to secure access to key resources and transportation corridors.
3. Economic tools such as sanctions, trade restrictions, and supply chain controls are increasingly used as instruments of geopolitical influence.

## 4. Impact on Global Economic Stability

1. Disruptions at chokepoints can cause sudden spikes in energy prices and supply shortages.
2. Trade interruptions can affect manufacturing production, global markets, and economic growth.
3. Countries dependent on imported resources are particularly vulnerable to such disruptions.

## 5. Strategic Responses for Countries

1. Nations are attempting to diversify supply chains and energy sources to reduce vulnerability.
2. Strengthening regional partnerships and alternative trade routes can improve resilience.
3. Investments in domestic production, technology, and strategic reserves help enhance economic security.

## 6. Implications for India

1. India relies heavily on maritime trade for energy imports and international commerce.
2. Ensuring the security of sea lanes and supply chains is essential for economic stability and national security.
3. Diversification of energy sources and strengthening maritime partnerships are key strategic priorities.

## Conclusion

Strategic chokepoints remain critical to the functioning of the global economy and international security. In an era of increasing geopolitical competition, countries must strengthen supply chain resilience and maritime security to protect economic interests and ensure stable global trade flows.

Source: https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/hormuz-chokepoints-countries-economic-strategy-bottlenecks-cold-war-supply-chain-11773057843729.html

**UPSC Mains Practice Question**

Q. *Strategic maritime chokepoints play a crucial role in global trade and energy security. Discuss their geopolitical significance and examine their implications for India.* (250 words)

## Introduction

Strategic maritime chokepoints are narrow sea routes through which a large share of global trade and energy supplies pass. These locations hold immense geopolitical importance because disruptions in these routes can significantly affect international trade, energy markets, and economic stability.

## Geopolitical Significance of Chokepoints

**1. Control of Global Trade Routes-** Chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz and Strait of Malacca handle significant portions of global oil and trade flows.
**2. Strategic Leverage in International Politics-** Countries controlling these routes can influence global energy supply and maritime security.
**3. Vulnerability to Conflicts-** Regional conflicts or blockades in chokepoints can disrupt global supply chains and trade networks.

## Implications for India

**1. Energy Security-** India depends heavily on imported oil transported through critical maritime routes.
**2. Maritime Security-** Ensuring secure sea lanes in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is vital for India's economic interests.
**3. Supply Chain Resilience-** Diversification of energy sources and strengthening maritime partnerships can reduce vulnerability.

## Conclusion

Strategic chokepoints remain central to global economic stability and geopolitical competition. For India, strengthening maritime security and diversifying supply chains will be essential to safeguard energy security and national economic interests.
Source: https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/hormuz-chokepoints-countries-economic-strategy-bottlenecks-cold-war-supply-chain-11773057843729.html