

FINDER

09th

May

2026



FORTUNE IAS NEWS DAILY EXPLAINER

A watershed moment in India's defence posture

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

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

1. Background of Operation Sindoor

- **Operation Sindoor** began on **May 7, 2025** as a high-intensity military strike against terrorist infrastructure.
- It was launched in response to the **Pahalgam terror attack** of April 22, 2025.
- The operation marked a major change in India's **national security doctrine** and military thinking.
- India earlier followed a policy of **"reactive restraint"**, where it **avoided strong military action after terror attacks**.
- After **Operation Sindoor**, India strengthened its **"zero tolerance" policy** against terrorism.
- India now considers any **cross-border terrorist attack** as an **"act of war"**.

2. India's Military Response

- The **Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force** carried out coordinated strikes with a free hand from political leadership.
- India successfully targeted **nine terrorist bases**, including **Bahawalpur** and **Muridke** in Pakistan.
- On May 9-10, after Pakistani air attacks, the **Indian Air Force** struck **11 military bases** inside Pakistan.
- India used advanced systems like the **S-400 air defence system** to deny Pakistani air operations.
- Pakistan eventually sought a **ceasefire** after facing heavy military damage.

3. Strategic and Political Significance

- Operation Sindoor demonstrated **India's willingness to act despite the nuclear threat** from Pakistan.
- The operation showed **strong coordination between civil and military leadership**.
- Experts viewed it as one of the most decisive actions against a **nuclear-armed neighbour**.
- The ceasefire decision was taken after India achieved its military objectives.
- The operation sent a **strong warning to both terror groups and their supporters in Pakistan**.

4. Implications for India's Defence Sector

- India's defence forces must remain in a **high state of readiness** after the operation.
- The operation highlighted the need for greater **Atmanirbharata (self-reliance)** in defence production.
- The government is promoting reforms in **defence, aerospace, cyber, space, and Artificial Intelligence** sectors.
- The success of indigenous systems boosted India's **startup and innovation ecosystem**.
- India must adopt a **"whole-of-nation" approach** by integrating **MSMEs, startups, and defence industries** to strengthen **self-reliance in defence**.

The elephant in India's data room

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 2
Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential

1. Background

- **Members of Parliament (MPs) frequently ask basic factual questions on welfare schemes** and public services.
- Such **information should ideally be publicly available in standardised form.**
- Many questions during the 17th Lok Sabha focused only on basic statistics.
- This **reflects fragmentation and lack of interoperability in India's data system.**

2. Fragmented Data Ecosystem in India

- **NITI Aayog's National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) observed that Ministries use inconsistent standards and definitions.**
- **Time periods and regional classifications differ** across government departments.
- **Data collected for individual schemes cannot be integrated** seamlessly.
- The **absence of shared standards creates inefficiency** and duplication in governance.

3. Fiscal Leakages Due to Poor Data Governance

- **NITI Aayog's June 2025 report estimated that duplicate welfare entries escalate government spending by 4%–7% annually.**
- **Removal of 17.1 million ineligible names from the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme could save ₹90 billion.**
- **Deleting 35 million fake Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) connections could save ₹210 billion over two years.**
- **Eliminating 16 million fake ration cards may save around ₹100 billion annually.**
- **Poor-quality databases lead to fiscal waste** and inaccurate welfare delivery.

4. Policy and Economic Consequences

- Duplicate health records **create conflicting disease estimates.**
- Unreliable data weakens evidence-based policymaking.

- **India had missing and outdated indicators in the Global Innovation Index 2024.**
- Poor coordination between agencies affects governance credibility.
- **OECD estimates better public-sector data sharing could increase GDP growth by 1.5%.**

5. Reforms Needed for Data Standardisation

- The **National Data Governance Framework Policy (NDGFP) proposes the India Data Management Office (IDMO).**
- IDMO should **have authority to enforce binding standards across Ministries and States.**
- India should **align with the United Nations (UN) System of National Accounts** and global statistical standards.
- The site "data.gov.in" should **become a centralised and schema-consistent national repository.**
- **NITI Aayog's Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI)** should be used as an annual accountability benchmark.

The **Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI)** is an **assessment tool developed by NITI Aayog to measure the quality, accessibility, usability, and governance of data** generated by government ministries and departments. It aims to improve evidence-based policymaking by promoting standardized, reliable, and timely public-sector data management across India.

Nightmare on the Narmada

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3
Disaster and disaster management.

1. Context

- A **boat capsizing tragedy** occurred on **April 30** at **Bargi dam (Narmada river) near Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh** due to sudden stormy weather.
- The cruise operated by **MPSTDC (Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation)** overturned within minutes amid **strong winds and high waves.**

- Out of **41 people onboard**, **13 people (including women and children) died**, despite the incident occurring just **100 metres from the shore**.
- **Need for reforms:** strict safety enforcement, **mandatory briefings**, adequate life-saving gear, **weather monitoring**, and **expert-led investigations**.

2. Causes and Immediate Factors

- **Sudden weather change** triggered strong waves, leading to capsizing during a turn.
- **No safety briefing or emergency instructions** were given to passengers before the ride.
- **Inadequate life-saving measures** – shortage of jackets, no child-sized jackets, improper usage.
- **Alleged crew negligence** – failure to guide passengers; passengers themselves distributed jackets.
- **Passengers trapped inside cabin**, making life jackets ineffective and increasing fatalities.

3. Rescue and Administrative Response

- **Initial rescue by locals and construction workers**, who guided and physically rescued survivors.
- **Multi-agency operation** involving **Army divers, National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Emergency Response Force, police, and fishermen**; operations lasted **3 days**.
- **Heavy machinery** used to retrieve vessel and bodies amid difficult weather conditions.
- **State response:** CM ordered **high-level probe**, compensation, and action against officials.
- **Negligence action:** crew terminated/suspended; **court took suo motu cognizance**.
- **Confusion in passenger count** (due to complimentary entries) delayed rescue coordination.

4. Systemic Issues and Way Forward

- **Poor enforcement of safety guidelines (2018 Adventure Tourism Guidelines)** – no mandatory briefing followed.
- **Absence of state inland vessel rules** despite **Inland Vessels Act, 2021**.
- **Institutional gaps** – no maritime board; regulatory ambiguity between departments.
- **Weak SOPs (Standard Operating Procedure)** – lack of drills, safety audits, and accountability mechanisms.

KEYWORDS

National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP)

- The National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) **was launched by NITI Aayog in May 2022 to provide easy and free access to government datasets**.
- It aims to promote data-driven policymaking and strengthen cooperative federalism in India.
- NDAP **standardizes datasets from different ministries, enabling cross-sectoral analysis** such as linking health, education, and economic data.
- It provides interactive tools like maps, charts, and dashboards for researchers, journalists, students, and policymakers.
- NDAP **hosts more than 200 datasets from over 46 ministries, with regular updates** to improve public data accessibility.

Global Innovation Index (GII)

- The Global Innovation Index (GII) is an **annual ranking that measures the innovation capacity and performance of countries across the world**.
- It was **first launched in 2007 and is published every year by the World Intellectual Property Organization**.
- The index is **recognized by the UN as an important reference for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies and tracks trends** in technology, investment, and innovation ecosystems.
- In **GII 2025, Switzerland retained the first rank for the 15th consecutive year**, while China entered the top 10 for the first time.
- **India improved its position to 38th rank in 2025 from 81st rank in 2015**, reflecting strong growth in startups, digital innovation, and research capacity.

Places In News

Mount Dukono

- **Mount Dukono**, located on **Halmahera Island** east of **Sulawesi** in **Indonesia**, is an **active volcano** that has been erupting almost continuously since **1933**.
- Indonesia lies along the **Pacific “Ring of Fire”**, a region known for intense **seismic and volcanic activity**, and has over **120 active volcanoes**.
- **Mount Dukono** has erupted more than **200 times** since **March last year**.
- Authorities have warned about possible **secondary hazards**, including **volcanic mudflows**, especially during heavy **rainfall**, which may flow through rivers originating from the volcano’s slopes.
- The volcano is currently placed at **Level 2** in the **Volcanological Survey of Indonesia’s four-level alert system**, indicating **increased volcanic activity** and the need for caution.

Seoul

- **Seoul**, capital of South Korea, lies on the **Han River** and near the Demilitarized Zone, making it a strategically **significant historic** centre since the **Joseon Dynasty**.
- Key driver of the **“Miracle on the Han River”**(refers to the rapid economic growth of South Korea from the 1960s to 1990s) after the Korean War; a major hub for firms like Samsung, LG, and Hyundai.
- Model **smart city**, noted for Cheonggyecheon Stream restoration improving where an elevated highway was removed to revive a natural stream, reducing **urban heat island effects** and improving **biodiversity**.
- It is the centre of the **Korean Wave (Hallyu)**, including K-pop and K-dramas, showcasing **soft power diplomacy** that strengthens global influence, including ties under the India-South Korea **Special Strategic Partnership**.
- Blends modernity with heritage, with UNESCO sites like **Changdeokgung Palace Complex** and **Jongmyo Shrine**.

