

FORTUNE IAS NEWS DAILY EXPLAINER

Echoes of Karbala, Iran beyond the shadows of war

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

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

1. What is the main geopolitical argument?

- Donald Trump's (U.S President) idea of taxing ships (20%) in the **Strait of Hormuz** and then focusing on Gulf investments shows that U.S. policy is more about **deals and profits**.
- The conflict with Iran is not really about **democracy or human rights** but about **controlling oil resources and key trade routes**.
- This shows how big powers often **hide economic interests behind moral language**.

2. What did the author observe about Iran as a country?

- Many global leaders, including **Salman Khurshid (former External Affairs Minister of India)** attended, showing Iran is **not diplomatically isolated**.
- The author being a **Sunni Muslim** invited reflects **inclusiveness beyond sectarian divisions**, especially since Iran is a **Shia-majority country** officially following **Shia Islam**.
- Despite sanctions and threats, Iran appeared **calm, organised, and well-managed**, not chaotic.

3. What is said about women and society in Iran?

- Women were actively working as **journalists and media professionals**, showing **strong public participation**.
- This challenges the Western image that Iranian

women are **silent or restricted**.

- Women were seen in **different styles of dress and moving freely**, showing **social diversity and confidence**.
- Women also held **visible political positions**, indicating their **role in governance**.

4. What emotional and cultural message is conveyed?

- The funeral of **Ali Khamenei (Iran's top leader)** showed **deep national grief**, especially the death of a child symbolising **innocent suffering**.
- The tragedy reminded the author of the **Battle of Karbala**, connecting present suffering with **Islamic history**.

The **Battle of Karbala** was a tragic event that took place in **680 CE (10th of Muharram, 61 AH)** in **Karbala (located in present-day Iraq)**, where **Imam Husayn, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, was martyred along with his small group of followers by the forces of the Umayyad caliph Yazid, symbolising the struggle against injustice and tyranny**.

- Cultural similarities made Kashmir feel like "Iran-e-Sagheer" (meaning "Little Iran," referring to the **strong cultural and historical links between Kashmir and Iran due to Persian influence**).
- Overall, Iran is presented as a **strong, dignified, and culturally rich society beyond media portrayals**.

Iran's disruptive strategy, its global consequences

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1. What is Iran's strategy and why is it criticised?

- Iran's actions in the **Strait of Hormuz** and targeting Gulf neighbours may seem like **short-term operational successes but are considered long-term strategic mistakes**.
- These actions risk **isolating Iran globally and slowing its economic progress**.
- Iran has followed a **strategy of disruption**, projecting itself as opposing Western imperialism and supporting Palestine through resistance.
- Over time, this approach has **distanced Iran from much of the international community**.

2. How has Iran expanded its influence through proxies?

- After the **Iran-Iraq War**, Iran grew more assertive but frustrated with direct confrontation against the **U.S. and Israel**.
- In the late 1990s, it began supporting proxy groups like **Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis**, forming the **"Axis of Resistance."**
- These groups helped Iran achieve **tactical success and regional disruption**, but also **increased global mistrust and isolation**.
- Iran is now aligned mainly with countries like **Russia, China, and North Korea**, forming a bloc opposing the global order.

3. What is India's approach towards Iran?

- India maintains a **balanced and practical relationship** with Iran focused on **energy, trade, and projects like Chabahar port**.
- It has **reduced dependence on Iranian oil** over time while managing sanctions carefully.
- India prefers **diplomacy and restraint**, avoiding direct involvement in conflicts.
- It co-sponsored **UN Security Council Resolution 2817**, condemning Iran's attacks and urging peace.

UN Security Council Resolution 2817 is a **2026 UN resolution that condemned Iran's attacks and demanded it stop threats, especially to shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, to maintain regional stability**.

- India's approach reflects **multilateralism, dialogue, and consensus**, unlike Iran's disruptive tactics.

4. What challenges does Iran face and what choices lie ahead?

- Iran remains **militarily capable but politically isolated**, with leadership influenced by the **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (elite Iranian military force)** and hardliners.
- Its actions like **attacking tankers and proposing special transit rates in the Strait of Hormuz** show continued coercive behaviour.
- These actions create **global concern, especially for countries dependent on energy routes like India**.
- Iran has the potential for **economic growth as an upper-middle-income country**, but must reduce aggression.
- The best path forward is to **ease tensions, use diplomacy, and benefit from economic opportunities like asset unfreezing and increased oil exports**.

Digitisation and efficiency in criminal justice system

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. What is the issue?

- The Centre aims to achieve a **full digital rollout of India's criminal justice system** from **July 1, 2027**.
- Procedures related to **investigation and trials** under the **new criminal laws** will be digitally recorded and connected through the **Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)**.
- The data will be stored on the government's **MeghRaj cloud platform**.

The **Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** is an initiative of the **e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India** that enables the **seamless exchange of data and information** among key pillars of the criminal justice system, including **courts, police, prisons, and forensic science laboratories**, through a **single platform**.

The **e-Committee** is the governing body charged with **overseeing the e-Courts Project** conceptualized under the "National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary-2005".

- According to the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, only **46% of FIRs** were digitally transmitted to courts, showing gaps in digital integration.
- The planned **2027 full digital rollout** aims to bridge these gaps and improve the **speed, coordination, and efficiency** of the criminal justice system.

Export gains: On India's trade data for June

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2. What is India's criminal justice system?

- The criminal justice system includes the **police, courts, prisons, forensic services, and prosecution**.
- India largely follows the **adversarial system**, where both sides present their case before an impartial court.
- It follows the principle of **natural justice**, including **Audi alteram partem**, meaning **no person should be condemned without being heard**.

3. What reforms have been introduced in the criminal justice system?

- The **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** and **Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)** have been replaced by the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)** and **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)**, respectively.
- The new framework seeks to make criminal justice more **citizen-oriented** while balancing the **rights of the accused and victims**.
- Forensic examination of crime scenes** has been made mandatory for offences punishable with **seven years or more of imprisonment**.
- The number of **forensic laboratories** increased from **129 in 2023** to **154 in 2025**.

4. Why is digitisation important?

- Digitisation can create a connected digital process from **FIR registration and investigation** to **chargesheet, trial, and final disposal**.

1. What is the issue?

- India's **trade deficit increased sharply by 430% in June 2026**, mainly due to a rise in **merchandise imports**.
- However, the increase was largely driven by higher imports of **crude oil, gold, fertilizers, and electronic goods**, rather than a broad deterioration in India's trade performance.
- The trade data also show how India is responding to the **West Asia crisis** and global economic uncertainties.

2. Why did India's imports increase?

- The value of **crude oil imports rose by 40%**, reflecting higher global oil prices.
- Gold imports** became costlier amid global uncertainty and higher import duties.
- Fertilizer imports increased by 201% in value** as India's natural gas supplies were affected by disruptions linked to **West Asia**.
- Imports of **electronic components** increased as India's domestic **electronics manufacturing and assembly sector** expanded.

3. How did India's exports perform?

- **Merchandise exports** grew by **15.5% in June 2026** and **16% in the first quarter (Q1) of 2026-27**.
- **Non-petroleum exports** also recorded strong growth of **16.5% in June** and **12.4% in Q1**.
- India's exports increased across most global regions except **West Asia**, indicating successful **export diversification**.

4. What are the key concerns and the way forward?

- India needs to increase the **domestic production of electronic components** to reduce import dependence and strengthen **supply-chain security**.
- While merchandise exports performed strongly, **services exports** grew by only **2.9% in June** and **6.2% in Q1**.
- India must continue strengthening its **services sector**, including **Global Capability Centres (GCCs)**, while maintaining momentum in **merchandise exports**.

Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are offshore units set up by multinational companies to provide specialised services to their parent organisations. They handle areas such as **information technology (IT)**, **research and development (R&D)**, **customer support**, and **other business operations**.

KEYWORDS

MeghRaj

- **MeghRaj**, also known as the **GI Cloud (Government of India Cloud)**, is India's **national cloud computing infrastructure**.
- It was established under the **Digital India initiative** and launched in **2014**.
- It provides **secure, scalable, and elastic cloud facilities** to support the delivery of **e-Governance services**.
- It aims to **accelerate the delivery of e-services** while optimising the government's **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** spending.

- The **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** provides cloud services to various **Central Government Ministries and Departments**.
- **MeghRaj** consists of multiple **cloud computing environments** across different locations, operating under common **government protocols, guidelines, and standards**.

Semicon 2.0

- **Semicon 2.0** aims to strengthen India's **semiconductor ecosystem**, with an outlay of **₹1,27,500 crore**.
- **Chip Design**: Promote **chip design** and **semiconductor intellectual property (IP)**.
- **Machines and Materials**: Support domestic production of **semiconductor equipment, materials, chemicals, and gases**.
- **Semiconductor Fabs**: Attract investment to set up more **semiconductor fabrication (fab) units** in India.
- **ATMP/OSAT**: Strengthen **semiconductor assembly, testing, and packaging** capabilities.
 - ➔ **OSAT** (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test) and **ATMP** (Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging)
- **R&D**: Develop **advanced semiconductor technologies** in collaboration with research institutions in India and abroad.
- **Talent Development**: Expand **skill development and training** in semiconductor and chip technologies.

The Three-North Protective Forest Program ("Great Green Wall")

- A recent government-organized media tour to the **Kubuqi Desert** highlighted progress in an anti-desertification initiative, which has **reduced China's desertified land by about 10% since 2000**.
- The program was **started by the Chinese government in 1978** to stop desert expansion and has **transformed vast regions covering nearly half of China**.
- It uses **"straw checkerboards"** - a method to

stop sand movement where workers place sticks in a box-like grid pattern on sand, which holds the sand in place and prevents it from blowing away, allowing saplings planted inside to grow safely without being buried or uprooted

- The project has **increased forest cover from about 5% in 1978 to 14% in 2022** and **reduced severely desertified areas by over 40%**.
- More than **300 million rural workers** have contributed, mostly part-time, helping to **plant around 500,000 sq km of forests**.

Environmental DNA (eDNA)

- **Environmental DNA (eDNA)** was recently highlighted at the **Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference** as a **key technological advancement transforming modern ecology research**.
- It refers to **genetic material collected from environmental samples like soil, water, or air**, coming from **skin cells, hair, excrement, or mucous shed by organisms**.
- It is a **highly sensitive and non-invasive method**, allowing scientists to **detect species without capturing or directly observing them**.
- It is widely used for **detecting invasive species early, monitoring rare or endangered wildlife, and tracking pathogens in ecosystems**.
- Its combination with **artificial intelligence, genomics, and computational tools** is helping researchers **solve complex ecological problems that were difficult to study earlier**.

Species in news

Rusty-tailed Flycatcher

- The **Rusty-tailed Flycatcher** was recently highlighted at the **Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference**, where researchers traced its migration using **eBird India**.
- It is a **small 14 cm passerine bird** of the **Muscicapidae**, identified by its **flat head, large dark eyes, and bright reddish-brown (rufous) rump and tail**.
- The species is **partially migratory**, with Himalayan populations being **resident**, while those from **Central Asia migrate to southwestern India along the Arabian Sea for winter**.
- During breeding, it lives in **high-altitude forests (1,500-3,600 m)** and feeds on **small insects like flies, beetles, and moths**.
- It is usually **solitary or in pairs**, hunts by **catching insects in air or foliage**, and is listed as **"Least Concern"** on the IUCN Red List.

