

FORTUNE IAS NEWS DAILY EXPLAINER

End the free rein of junk food advertising in India

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

Mains: General Studies - 2
Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

1. Why is there a need to regulate advertisements of Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs) and HFSS foods?

- UPF and HFSS advertisements often highlight selective claims such as “baked”, “multigrain”, and “no maida” while concealing high levels of sugar, salt, fat, additives, and refined carbohydrates.

Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs): Industrially manufactured food products containing ingredients and additives not usually used in home cooking, such as flavourings, emulsifiers, sweeteners, and preservatives.

High Fat, Sugar and Salt foods (HFSS): Foods containing high levels of fat, sugar, and/or salt, which can increase the risk of obesity and other non-communicable diseases when consumed frequently.

- Celebrities promote products** that are often high in sugar, salt, and fat.
- Advertisements **encourage people to buy and eat more junk food.**
- Junk food consumption is linked to obesity, diabetes, and heart diseases.**
- Children are easily influenced by advertisements on TV, social media, and the internet.

2. What are the health risks of Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)?

- UPFs are **designed to be very tasty and can lead to overeating.**
- They **reduce the consumption** of fresh and traditional foods.
- They **increase the risk of obesity** and high blood pressure.
- They **raise the chances of heart disease and Type-2 diabetes.**
- Studies show a strong link between UPF consumption and non-communicable diseases.

3. What steps has India taken to address the problem of UPFs?

- The **National Multisectoral Action Plan (2017–22)** proposed restrictions on junk food advertisements.
- The **Supreme Court supported front-of-pack warning labels** on packaged foods.
- The Economic Survey 2025–26** highlighted the dangers of unhealthy diets.
- Many Members of Parliament have demanded warning labels, advertising controls, and taxes on UPFs.
- Courts have warned that misleading food advertisements can harm public health.

4. What measures are suggested to create a healthier food environment in India?

- Introduce stricter legal controls on advertising and promotion of UPFs and HFSS foods** through amendments to advertisement laws.
- Implement mandatory front-of-pack warning labels** on packaged food products.

- **Restrict child-targeted marketing across television, digital media, social media, sports events, and influencer platforms.**
- **Ensure schools remain free from UPFs, HFSS foods, and misleading nutrition messaging through clear policy measures.**
- **Encourage companies to redirect resources toward minimally processed foods and healthier local food markets, promoting sustainable food systems.**

Britain after Brexit, divided, uncertain and stagnant

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. Why Did Brexit Happen?

'Brexit' is the name given to the United Kingdom's **departure from the European Union**. It is a combination of 'Britain' and 'exit'. **On 23 June 2016, the UK held a referendum** on its membership of the EU. The question facing voters was: 'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?' 51.89% of voters voted to leave the EU. **The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020.**

- **Many people wanted Britain to have more control** over its laws, trade, and immigration policies.
- Some people felt that the **EU had too much influence** over Britain's decisions.
- Brexit became a **protest vote against the political establishment**, especially among communities that felt neglected by policymakers.
- Economic grievances after the **2008 Financial Crisis**, years of **austerity**, declining living standards, and concerns about **immigration** increased support for leaving the EU.

2. Did Brexit Solve Britain's Economic Problems?

- Most economists believe Brexit has reduced **trade, investment, productivity, and financial services growth.**

- The loss of easy access to the **EU market** created additional trade barriers and paperwork.
- Britain's economic difficulties were largely **structural**, not caused solely by the EU.

3. Has Brexit Reduced Immigration?

- Despite promises to control immigration, overall **immigration increased significantly in Britain** after Brexit.
- The number of **EU migrants** declined, but **non-EU immigration** rose sharply.
- Labour shortages, especially in the **National Health Service (NHS)**, led to increased recruitment from countries such as **India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Egypt, and the Philippines.**
- The number of Indian nurses in Britain increased from about **10,000 to 40,000.**

4. Why Is Britain Still Deeply Divided?

- **Brexit divided Britain into two groups** — those who supported leaving the EU (**Leavers**) and those who wanted to remain (**Remainers**).
- **Immigration has become a controversial political issue**, causing strong disagreements among people.
- Many politicians focus on **immigration issues** to attract voters instead of addressing broader economic challenges.
- Frequent political instability is evident from multiple changes in **Prime Ministers, Home Secretaries, Foreign Secretaries, and Chancellors** since Brexit.
- Ten years after the referendum, Britain remains uncertain about its **identity, future direction, and place in the world.**

Are footpaths more than safe spaces?

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Economic and Social Development-Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.

Mains: General Studies - 2
Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

1. Why Did the Supreme Court Highlight the Importance of Footpaths?

- The **Supreme Court** said **footpaths are not just for preventing accidents**; they have an **independent purpose**.
- A safe and comfortable footpath supports the **fundamental right to walk**.
- Broad footpaths reflect **civilisational progress, accessibility, and public welfare**.

2. Why Are Footpaths Important for Society?

- Footpaths provide **equitable access** to **public spaces** for all citizens.
- Access to common spaces should not be limited to the **motorised class alone**.
- The Court referred to **Article 39(b)**, which requires **community resources** to be used for the **common good**.
- Well-designed footpaths improve the **beauty, inclusiveness, and accessibility** of cities and towns.

3. What Is the Significance of Walking in India?

- Walking has played an important role in India's **history, politics, and social movements**.
- It has been a means of **protest, public awareness, discovery, and social mobilisation**.
- Walking is linked to the **freedoms of speech, expression, peaceful protest, and association**.
- The Court stated that walking is not merely movement but an expression of **democratic rights and public participation**.

4. What Reforms Did the Court Recommend?

- The Court noted that authorities often prioritise **motor vehicles** over **pedestrians**.
- **Urban development authorities, municipalities, and panchayats** are the primary **duty-bearers** responsible for protecting footpaths.
- It recommended a **separate statutory law** to protect the **fundamental right to walk safely**.
- The Court also proposed creating a **full-time regulatory body to protect, plan, and enforce the right to walk safely on demarcated footpaths**.

➡ The Court noted that **regulatory bodies play a key role in the effective implementation of fundamental rights**.

➡ The Court **cited the Right to Education Act and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** as successful examples of such a framework.

- A copy of the judgment was sent to the **Central Government** and the **Law Commission of India** to develop an appropriate **legal framework**.

Can police re-open probe without court approval?

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

Mains: General Studies - 2
Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

1. What did the Supreme Court hold in Palaniswamy Veeraraja v. State of Karnataka?

- The Court held that **prior permission of the Magistrate is required** for further investigation after a closure report.
- It **quashed the FIR and chargesheet** due to absence of such permission.
- Despite multiple applications, **no order granting permission was on record**.
- Earlier, police had filed **two closure reports**, calling the dispute **purely civil**.
- Relying on State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal (1992), the Court held that **civil disputes should not be criminalised**.

2. Can a supplementary report be filed without Magistrate's approval?

- **Section 173(2) of the CrPC:** Requires police to submit a **final report (chargesheet/closure report)** to the Magistrate after investigation.
- **Section 173(8) of the CrPC:**
 - ➡ Allows police to conduct **further investigation** if new evidence emerges.

- ⊖ Permits filing of a **supplementary report**.
- ⊖ Does **NOT** explicitly mention the need for prior Magistrate approval
- **Section 193(9) BNSS** is **pari materia** (dealing with the same subject matter) with Section 173(8)
- **Therefore, while the law allows further investigation and filing of supplementary reports, it does not explicitly state that prior approval of the Magistrate is necessary.**

3. What has the Supreme Court held on further investigation?

- In *Vinay Tyagi v. Irshad Ali* (2013):
 - ⊖ Permission is not explicit but **must be read as necessary**.
- Doctrine of **contemporanea expositio** (interpretation based on long-standing and consistent practice) supports this practice.
- In *Rama Chaudhary v. State of Bihar* (2024):
 - ⊖ Reaffirmed that **permission is essential**.
- **BNSS proviso**: Makes permission mandatory **once trial begins**.

4. What is the current legal position?

- **Magistrate's permission is effectively mandatory** for further investigation.
- Applies after a chargesheet **or closure report is filed**.
- Absence of permission can lead to **quashing of proceedings**.
- Further investigation is **judicially controlled, not a free police power**.
- **Way Forward**: The law should be **clearly amended to expressly mandate prior judicial approval for further investigation**, removing ambiguity and ensuring procedural fairness.

KEYWORDS

NAFIS (National Automated Fingerprint Identification System)

- NAFIS is a **pan-India searchable database of crime and criminal-related fingerprints managed by the National Crime Records Bureau under the Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- Its objective is to **collect and maintain fingerprint records of criminals from all States and Union Territories** in a centralized system.
- The **system enables law enforcement agencies to upload, trace, and retrieve fingerprint information in real time, 24x7**.
- NAFIS assigns a **unique 10-digit National Fingerprint Number** to each offender based on biometric data, which remains valid for life.
- It helps police quickly identify suspects, link multiple crimes committed by the same person, and improve criminal investigation efficiency across India.

Criminal Procedure Identification (CrPI) System

- The CrPI System is a **centralized digital platform developed by the National Crime Records Bureau to implement the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022** and modernize criminal identification records.
- It **enables police and prison authorities to collect, process, store, and share biometric and physical data** of arrested, convicted, and trial-stage individuals through a nationwide database.
- The system **records measurements such as fingerprints, palm and foot impressions, photographs, iris and retina scans, biological samples, signatures, and handwriting**.
- **Measurement Collection Units (MCUs)** are established in police districts, prisons, and central agencies to digitally capture and upload data.
- **Managed by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, the centralized database links

local records with national intelligence networks, helping law enforcement agencies identify offenders and strengthen criminal investigations.

India–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

- The India–European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is **expected to be signed by the end of 2026 and implemented in early 2027**.
- Under the agreement, **about 93% of Indian exports to the 27-member European Union market** will receive duty-free access.
- The FTA is **expected to benefit labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, footwear, automobiles**, and engineering goods through lower tariffs.
- **European products such as wines and luxury cars are likely to become cheaper in India** due to tariff reductions under the agreement.
- Besides trade in goods, **the agreement includes provisions on services and facilitates the movement of skilled professionals between India and the European Union**.

Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024

- Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 **aims to prevent question paper leaks, cheating, and other unfair practices in public recruitment and entrance examinations**.
- It applies to examinations conducted by bodies such as the UPSC, SSC, NTA, RRB, and banking recruitment agencies.
- Individuals **involved in unfair means can face imprisonment from 3 to 5 years and a fine up to ₹10 lakh**.
- Service providers or institutions involved in organized **malpractice can be punished with 3 to 10 years of imprisonment and fines up to ₹1 crore**.

- All **offences under the Act are cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable, and investigations must be conducted by officers of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) or Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) rank or above**.

Biochar



- **Biochar** is a **charcoal-like substance** produced by heating **agricultural and forestry waste (biomass)** under **low-oxygen conditions** through a process called **pyrolysis**.
- It is highly **porous**, helping to **improve soil structure, retain water**, and create a favourable environment for **beneficial microorganisms**.
- When added to **degraded soils**, biochar enhances **water-holding capacity** and promotes the growth of **soil microbes**, thereby improving **soil health**.
- Integrating **biochar** with **natural farming, soil health management**, and **carbon farming** can generate significant **environmental and economic benefits**.
- As **droughts, heatwaves, and erratic rainfall** become more frequent and intense, improving **soil health** through biochar can help sustain **agricultural productivity**.
- In India, the use of **biochar** remains largely confined to **research trials and pilot projects**, with many **farmers** still unfamiliar with the technology.

Project Nimbus

- **Project Nimbus** is a **\$1 billion cloud computing contract** between the **Israeli government, Google, and Amazon**.
- The project provides **cloud services** to **Israeli government ministries, authorities, and state-owned companies**.
- The contract was initially signed for **7 years**, with an option to extend it for up to **23 years**.
- Critics argue that **Project Nimbus** could aid the **surveillance of Palestinians** and support **Israeli settlements** in Palestinian territories.
- **Leaked documents** reportedly showed that Israel required **Google and Amazon** not to restrict government use of their cloud services.
- This would apply even if such use violated the companies' **terms of service**.
- **Google** has stated that Project Nimbus is **not related to military operations, weapons, or classified intelligence**, while **Amazon** has emphasized its commitment to **customer privacy**.

Tax buoyancy

- **Tax buoyancy** is in the news because **Kerala's Revised Budget 2026-27** relies heavily on a **swift turnaround in tax buoyancy** to manage its rising debt and high committed expenditures (such as salaries and pensions).
- **Tax buoyancy** measures how effectively a country's tax revenues rise in response to economic growth (**Gross Domestic Product**). If a tax system is buoyant, the government collects more money naturally as the economy expands, **without introducing new taxes or increasing tax rates**.
- It is calculated by dividing the **percentage change in tax collection** by the **percentage change in nominal GDP**. A value greater than **1** is considered desirable, as it shows **tax revenues are growing faster than the economy**.
- The strength of this indicator depends on **expansion of the tax base, simplification of tax rules, and improved compliance** through

formalization and digitization (like **GST e-invoicing and data analytics**), rather than aggressive tax collection.

- It acts as a key indicator of **fiscal health and macroeconomic stability**. High tax buoyancy generates **higher revenue during economic growth**, enabling increased capital expenditure, welfare spending, and **reduction of fiscal deficit without excessive borrowing**.

Geotubes



- **Geotubes** are massive, tubular containers manufactured from **high-strength, permeable synthetic fabrics (geotextiles)** that are specifically designed to withstand **extreme pressure, UV radiation, and environmental degradation over time**.
- They are deployed in the sea as **submerged breakwaters** to **intercept and reduce wave energy**, causing waves to break before reaching the shore.
- By creating a **sheltered zone**, geotubes promote **sediment deposition and beach accretion**, helping in **coastline stabilization and prevention of erosion**.
- They are in the news because it was **recently found that a geotube-based offshore breakwater at Poonthura (Kerala) widened the beach by nearly 37 metres**, leading the state to consider **expanding this technology to other vulnerable coastal areas**.

Places in news

Lake Lucerne

- Lake Lucerne is in the news because a lakeside mountain resort near it in Switzerland is hosting high-level backchannel peace talks ("Lake Lucerne Summit").
- Lake Lucerne is located **entirely within Switzerland** and is the **fourth-largest lake** in the country, surrounded by **steep, fjord-like mountains** such as **Mount Pilatus** and **Mount Rigi**.
- The lake has a **highly irregular shape with four distinct arms and sharp bends**, formed due to **glacial erosion by the Reuss Glacier**.
- The **River Reuss flows into the lake at Erstfeld and exits at the city of Lucerne**, serving as its **main inflow and outflow**.
- The lake's shores are associated with the **birthplace of the Swiss Confederation**, where the **Oath of Rütli (1291)** was taken, marking a **foundational moment in Swiss national identity**.

