



FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> EMPOWERING INDIA'S ANNADATAS > INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS > CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you gauge your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

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**FIRST ATTEMPT TOPPERS FROM
OUR PRELIMS CUM MAINS BATCH**

KASTURI SHA
AIR 68

MANJIMA P
AIR 235

FABI RASHEED
AIR 71

SWATHI S BABU
AIR 522

OORMILA J S
AIR 561

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CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF AND INDIA'S MILITARY TRANSFORMATION

Syllabus: GS II - Indian Polity

PYQ MAPPING

Q) How is S-400 air defence system technically superior to any other system presently available in the world? (2021)

WHY IN NEWS

General **N.S. Raja Subramani** has assumed charge as India's third **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)**, emphasizing the vision of "**JAI**" — **Jointness, Atma Nirbharta, and Innovation** to strengthen India's defence preparedness.

INTRODUCTION

The office of the **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** represents a major reform in India's higher defence management architecture. Created in 2019, the CDS serves as the principal military adviser to the Defence Minister and acts as a catalyst for integration, modernization, and indigenisation of the armed forces.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CDS IN INDIA'S DEFENCE ARCHITECTURE

➔ Promoting Jointness Among Armed Forces:

- Enhances coordination among the Army, Navy, and Air Force.
- Example-** Facilitation of integrated theatre commands.

➔ Improving Operational Effectiveness:

- Enables unified planning and execution of military operations.
- Example-** Better synchronization of land, air, cyber, and maritime capabilities.

➔ Driving Defence Reforms:

- Leads transformation in military structures and

doctrines.

- Example-** Integration of logistics and procurement systems.

➔ Strengthening Indigenous Defence Capability:

- Supports self-reliance in defence production.
- Example-** Promotion of indigenous systems such as Tejas, Akash, and Project Kusha.

➔ Optimising Resource Utilisation:

- Reduces duplication and enhances efficiency in defence expenditure.
- Example-** Common procurement and maintenance mechanisms.

KEY PRIORITIES UNDER THE 'JAI' VISION

🌀 Jointness:

- Greater integration of the three services.
- Development of theatre command structures.

🌀 Atma Nirbharta:

- Accelerated induction of indigenous weapons and platforms.

- Reduced dependence on foreign defence imports.

🌀 Innovation:

- Adoption of emerging technologies such as AI, drones, cyber warfare, and space-based systems.
- Encouraging defence startups under the iDEX framework.

CHALLENGES BEFORE THE CDS

🌟 Inter-Service Coordination Issues:

- Differences in operational doctrines and service-specific priorities can slow the process of achieving effective jointness.
- Example-** Divergent views among the services on the structure and command of theatre commands.

building among the three services.

- Example-** Deliberations over the proposed Maritime and Air Defence Theatre Commands.

🌟 Implementation of Theatre Commands:

- Establishing integrated theatre commands requires major organisational restructuring and consensus-

Technological Modernisation: Rapid advancements in emerging technologies necessitate continuous capability upgrades and doctrinal adaptation.

- Example-** Growing importance of AI-enabled warfare, autonomous systems, and cyber capabilities.

✧ Budgetary Constraints:

- o Limited defence resources create challenges in balancing modernization, force expansion, and operational readiness.
- o **Example-** Capital acquisition requirements competing with revenue expenditure such as salaries and pensions.

✧ Evolving Security Threats:

- o India faces increasingly complex threats across conventional, cyber, space, and information domains.
- o **Example-** China's counter-space capabilities and the proliferation of drone warfare along India's borders.

WAY FORWARD

✧ Accelerate Theatre Command Reforms

- o Expediting the creation of integrated theatre commands can enhance joint planning, resource optimisation, and combat effectiveness.
- o **Example:** Adoption of integrated command structures similar to those employed by major military powers.

✧ Strengthen Defence Indigenisation

- o Expanding domestic defence manufacturing and research capabilities can reduce import dependence and enhance strategic autonomy.
- o **Example:** Indigenous platforms such as Tejas, Project Kusha, and the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).

✧ Invest in Emerging Technologies

- o Greater investment in cutting-edge technologies is

essential to prepare for future warfare.

- o **Example:** AI, quantum computing, cyber security, drones, and space-based military assets.

✧ Enhance Civil-Military-Industry Collaboration

- o Stronger partnerships among the armed forces, academia, startups, and industry can accelerate innovation and technology adoption.
- o **Example:** Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and Defence Industrial Corridors.

✧ Adopt a Whole-of-Nation Security Approach

- o Integrating military preparedness with economic, technological, and diplomatic capabilities can strengthen national security.
- o **Example:** Coordinated efforts among the armed forces, DRDO, ISRO, private industry, and strategic institutions.

CONCLUSION

The CDS is central to India's transition towards a modern, integrated, and self-reliant military force. With General N.S. Raja Subramani's emphasis on **Jointness, Atma Nirbharta, and Innovation**, the institution is poised to play a pivotal role in strengthening India's defence preparedness amid an increasingly complex security environment.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) The creation of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) marks a significant step in India's defence reforms. Discuss the role of the CDS in promoting jointness, military modernization, and self-reliance in the armed forces.

(15 marks) (250 words)

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS (EODB): STRENGTHENING INDIA'S BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy

PYQ MAPPING

Q) "Explain the rationale behind the Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to States) Act of 2017. How has GST helped in creating a common national market?" (2020)

WHY IN NEWS

Recently, the Government highlighted India's progress in **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)** through extensive reforms in digital governance, regulatory simplification, compliance reduction, logistics, taxation, insolvency resolution, and digital public infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) refers to the regulatory and institutional environment that enables businesses to start, operate, expand, and exit with minimal procedural hurdles. Over the past decade, India has undertaken wide-ranging reforms to build a transparent, technology-driven, and trust-based business ecosystem, improving investor confidence and global competitiveness.

MAJOR REFORMS STRENGTHENING EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

➔ Simplifying Business Entry and Formalisation:

- o Digital and paperless registration systems have reduced entry barriers for entrepreneurs.
- o **Example-** SPICe+ Form integrates company incorporation, PAN, TAN, GST, EPFO, and ESIC registrations through a single platform.
- o Startup ecosystem has expanded significantly through policy support.
- o **Example-** Startup India has recognized over **2.23 lakh startups** generating more than **23 lakh jobs**.

➔ Strengthening MSME Ecosystem:

- o Simplified registration and access to formal finance have boosted MSME growth.
- o **Example-** Udyam Registration Portal provides paperless self-declaration-based registration.
- o Credit access has improved through digital lending mechanisms.
- o **Example-** Credit Assessment Model (CAM) enables automated MSME loan appraisal.

➔ Modernising Land and Property Administration:

- o Digitisation of land records has improved transparency and reduced disputes.
- o **Example-** Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP).
- o Property registration has become more efficient through integrated platforms.
- o **Example-** National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS).

➔ Streamlining Regulatory Approvals:

- o Single-window clearance systems have reduced procedural delays.
- o **Example-** National Single Window System (NSWS) integrates approvals from multiple ministries and states.
- o Environmental clearances have become faster through digital platforms.
- o **Example-** PARIVESH Portal reduced average environmental clearance time.

➔ Improving Logistics and Market Connectivity:

- o Integrated infrastructure planning has enhanced supply-chain efficiency.
- o **Example-** PM GatiShakti National Master Plan.
- o Digital procurement has expanded market access for MSMEs.
- o **Example-** Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

➔ Taxation Reforms:

- o GST created a unified national market and reduced cascading taxation.
- o **Example-** Replacement of multiple indirect taxes by a single GST framework.
- o Digital tax administration has improved transparency.
- o **Example-** Faceless Assessment and Income Tax e-Filing Portal.

➔ Enhancing Cross-Border Trade:

- o Digital customs and export facilitation have reduced transaction costs.
- o **Example-** ICEGATE and eCoO 2.0.
- o Export promotion initiatives support local industries.
- o **Example-** Districts as Export Hubs (DEH).

➔ Expanding Digital Public Infrastructure:

- o Digital payment systems have transformed business transactions.
- o **Example-** UPI has become the world's largest real-time payment system.
- o Secure digital document management has improved business efficiency.
- o **Example-** Entity Locker and cKYC Registry.

➔ Building Trust-Based Governance:

SIGNIFICANCE OF EoDB REFORMS

🌀 Boosting Investment:

- o Improved regulatory certainty attracts domestic and foreign investment.
- o **Example-** Rising FDI inflows across manufacturing and services sectors.

🌀 Promoting Entrepreneurship:

- o Simplified procedures encourage startup creation and innovation.
- o **Example-** Growth of India's startup ecosystem.

🌀 Generating Employment:

- o Expansion of businesses creates new job opportunities.

CHALLENGES

● State-Level Implementation Gaps:

- o Variations in regulatory capacity across states affect uniform implementation.
- o **Example-** Differences in approval timelines among states.

● High Logistics Costs:

- o Logistics costs remain higher than those of major manufacturing economies.
- o **Example-** Supply-chain inefficiencies in some regions.

● Judicial Delays:

- o Contract enforcement and dispute resolution

- o Decriminalisation of minor offences has reduced regulatory burden.
- o **Example-** Jan Vishwas Act, 2023 and 2026.
- o Compliance reduction initiatives have simplified business operations.
- o **Example-** More than **47,000 compliances** reduced or simplified.

➔ Strengthening Insolvency Resolution: Time-bound insolvency framework has improved creditor confidence.

- o **Example-** Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016.
- o Recent amendments have enhanced procedural efficiency.
- o **Example-** IBC (Amendment) Act, 2026.

- o **Example-** Startup India generating millions of direct jobs.

🌀 Enhancing Global Competitiveness:

- o Efficient logistics and regulatory systems improve business productivity.
- o **Example-** Improvement in Logistics Performance Index rankings.

🌀 Supporting Formalisation:

- o Digital systems bring businesses into the formal economy.
- o **Example-** Increase in GST registrations and Udyam registrations.

continue to face delays.

- o **Example-** Pendency of commercial litigation cases.

● MSME Compliance Constraints:

- o Smaller enterprises often face difficulties adapting to digital compliance systems.
- o **Example-** Limited awareness of GST and export procedures.

● Land and Labour Bottlenecks:

- o Land acquisition and labour market rigidities continue to pose challenges.
- o **Example-** Delays in industrial project implementation.

WAY FORWARD

✦ Deepen Cooperative Federalism

- o Strengthen state-level reform implementation through competitive and cooperative mechanisms.
- o **Example-** Expansion of BRAP and District BRAP initiatives.

✦ Accelerate Judicial Reforms

- o Improve commercial dispute resolution through technology and specialized courts.
- o **Example-** Expansion of commercial courts and e-courts.

✦ Reduce Logistics Costs

- o Enhance multimodal connectivity and supply-chain integration.
- o **Example-** Faster implementation of PM GatiShakti projects.

✦ Strengthen MSME Handholding

- o Expand awareness and capacity-building programmes for digital compliance.
- o **Example-** Dedicated MSME facilitation centres.

✦ Leverage Emerging Technologies

- o Use AI, blockchain, and data analytics to improve governance and regulatory services.
- o **Example-** AI-enabled approval and compliance monitoring systems.

CONCLUSION

India's Ease of Doing Business reforms reflect a shift from a compliance-heavy regime to a facilitation-driven governance model. Sustained efforts in digitalisation, regulatory simplification, logistics modernization, and trust-based governance can further strengthen India's position as a globally competitive investment and business destination.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "Ease of Doing Business reforms are crucial for achieving the goals of economic growth, investment promotion, and employment generation." Examine the major reforms undertaken by India in this regard and discuss the challenges that remain.

(15 marks) (250 words)

INDIA–NEPAL RELATIONS

Syllabus: GS II - International Relations

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Discuss the significance of India's neighbourhood policy in promoting regional stability and development. (2024)

WHY IN NEWS

Recent remarks by Nepal Prime Minister **Balendra Shah (Balen)** on the India–Nepal boundary dispute suggest a more pragmatic approach, emphasizing diplomatic dialogue and mutual understanding in resolving differences over **Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura**.

INTRODUCTION

India and Nepal share a unique civilizational relationship rooted in history, culture, religion, geography, and people-to-people ties. Despite occasional differences over boundary issues and political perceptions, both countries remain indispensable partners. Recent developments provide an opportunity to build a more mature, balanced, and future-oriented bilateral relationship.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA–NEPAL RELATIONS

☀ Civilizational and Cultural Linkages:

- India and Nepal share deep cultural, religious, and linguistic ties that predate modern nation-states.
- Example-** Shared heritage of Lord Buddha and the Ramayana Circuit.

☀ Open Border and People-to-People Contacts:

- The open border facilitates movement, trade, employment, and social interactions.
- Example-** Nearly 1,700 km long open border between the two countries.

☀ Strategic and Security Importance:

- Nepal occupies a critical geopolitical position between India and China.

- Example-** Cooperation between the Indian and Nepalese Armies through regular military exchanges.

☀ Economic Interdependence:

- India is Nepal's largest trading partner and a major source of investment.
- Example-** Cross-border petroleum pipelines and power trade agreements.

☀ Connectivity and Regional Integration:

- Enhanced connectivity strengthens regional growth and integration.
- Example-** Jayanagar–Kurtha railway and Integrated Check Posts (ICPs).

KEY CHALLENGES IN INDIA–NEPAL RELATIONS

▼ Boundary Disputes:

- Differing interpretations of historical maps continue to fuel disagreements over Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura.
- Example-** Nepal's publication of a revised political map in 2020.

▼ Rise of Nationalist Narratives:

- Political mobilization around sovereignty issues sometimes generates anti-India sentiment.
- Example-** Domestic opposition to infrastructure and connectivity initiatives.

▼ China Factor:

- Expanding Chinese engagement in Nepal

introduces new strategic complexities.

- Example-** Chinese investments under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

▼ Perception of Asymmetry:

- Sections in Nepal perceive the relationship as unequal due to India's larger size and influence.
- Example-** Concerns regarding trade dependence and diplomatic engagement.

▼ Periodic Diplomatic Frictions:

- Differences over trade routes, border management, and protocol issues occasionally affect bilateral trust.
- Example-** Objections regarding Lipulekh Pass-related activities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCED COOPERATION

Hydropower Development:

- o Nepal's vast hydropower potential can support regional energy security.
- o **Example-** Arun-III Hydroelectric Project.

Cross-Border Connectivity:

- o Expanding transport and energy connectivity can boost trade and tourism.
- o **Example-** Motihari–Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline.

Tourism and Religious Circuits:

- o Joint promotion of cultural and pilgrimage tourism

can generate economic benefits.

- o **Example-** Ramayana Circuit and Buddhist Circuit.

Disaster Management Cooperation:

- o Shared vulnerabilities require coordinated responses.
- o **Example-** Flood management in Koshi and Gandak river basins.

Regional and Sub-Regional Cooperation:

- o Platforms such as BIMSTEC and BBIN can deepen economic integration.
- o **Example-** BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement.

WAY FORWARD

Resolve Boundary Issues Through Dialogue

- o Sustained diplomatic engagement can prevent disputes from becoming long-term irritants.
- o **Example:** Revival of Joint Boundary Working Mechanisms.

Strengthen Economic Partnership

- o Expanding trade, investment, and energy cooperation can reinforce mutual dependence.
- o **Example:** Long-term electricity export agreements.

Promote Mutual Sensitivity and Respect

- o Both sides should recognize each other's concerns and aspirations.
- o **Example:** Adopting a partnership-based rather than patronage-based approach.

Deepen Connectivity and Development Cooperation

- o Accelerating infrastructure projects can enhance regional prosperity.
- o **Example:** Cross-border rail, road, and transmission line projects.

Build a Future-Oriented Relationship

- o Focus should shift from historical grievances to shared developmental goals.
- o **Example:** Collaboration in digital economy, education, healthcare, and climate resilience.

CONCLUSION

India and Nepal share a relationship that transcends conventional diplomacy. While boundary disputes and political sensitivities remain challenges, recent signals from Kathmandu indicate the possibility of a more pragmatic engagement. By prioritizing dialogue, mutual respect, connectivity, and economic cooperation, both countries can transform their unique relationship into a model of sustainable neighbourhood partnership.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "India–Nepal relations are rooted in civilizational ties but are often tested by geopolitical and boundary-related challenges." Discuss the key challenges in bilateral relations and suggest measures to build a more sustainable and future-oriented partnership.

(15 marks) (250 words)

EMPOWERING INDIA'S ANNADATAS

Syllabus: GS III - Agriculture

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Explain the factors influencing the decision of the farmers on the selection of high value crops in India (2025)

Q) Explain various types of revolutions, took place in Agriculture after Independence in India. How these revolutions have helped in poverty alleviation and food security in India? (2017)

Q) Given the vulnerability of Indian agriculture to vagaries of nature, discuss the need for crop insurance and bring out the salient features of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) (2016)

WHY IN NEWS

A recent backgrounder titled "Empowering India's Annadatas" released by the Press Information Bureau highlights initiatives to strengthen farmers' income and promote sustainable agriculture.

INTRODUCTION

India's Annadatas, the providers of food, form the backbone of the nation's food security, rural economy, and agricultural growth. Over the past decade, a combination of policy reforms, technological interventions, and welfare initiatives has sought to empower farmers, enhance resilience, and build a more sustainable and inclusive agricultural ecosystem.

WHO IS ANNADATA?

- ➔ Annadata literally means **"the provider of food"** and refers to **farmers** who ensure food security for the nation.
- ➔ In the modern context, it includes **not only cultivators but also dairy farmers, fishers, livestock rearers, beekeepers, and other allied-sector workers** contributing to agricultural production.

IMPORTANCE

- ☀ **India's Economy:** Agriculture and allied sectors contribute about **18% of India's GVA**, with sectoral output rising from ₹20.9 lakh crore to ₹48.7 lakh crore (2014–15 to 2023–24), while India has emerged as the **world's largest producer of rice and milk**.
- ☀ **Food Security:** Farmers ensure food security for over **140 crore Indians**, with foodgrain production rising from **265 MT to 357.73 MT (2013–14 to 2024–25)**, while supporting the **NFSA** that provides subsidized foodgrains to around 80 crore beneficiaries.
- ☀ **Economic Growth:** Agriculture remains a **key pillar of the rural economy**, with exports rising from **USD 37.29 billion to USD 51.1 billion** and processed food exports increasing from **13.7% to 20.4%**, reflecting greater value addition and global competitiveness.
- ☀ **Employment & Livelihood Security:** Agriculture and allied sectors provide livelihoods to millions while **diversification** into dairy, fisheries, horticulture, and food processing creates **multiple income streams** and reduces dependence on crop farming alone.
- ☀ **Strategic Importance:** Farmers ensure **national food and nutritional security** by maintaining a **stable supply of food**, while rising production of cereals, pulses, milk, fruits, vegetables, eggs, and fish enhances dietary diversity and nutrition.

CHALLENGES

- ▼ **Income insecurity:** Farmers face unstable incomes due to **fluctuating market prices, rising input costs, and small, fragmented landholdings** that limit profitability.
- ▼ **Market access constraints:** Dependence on **middlemen** and limited access to effective **MSP procurement** mechanisms often reduce farmers' share in consumer prices and weaken their **bargaining power**.
- ▼ **Climate vulnerability:** Frequent droughts, floods, cyclones, heatwaves, and pest attacks adversely affect agricultural productivity and farmers' incomes.
- ▼ **Sustainability concerns:** **Climate variability, water stress**, and declining groundwater levels increase production uncertainty and threaten long-term **agricultural sustainability**.
- ▼ **Post-Harvest Losses:** Significant wastage of **perishable produce** due to inadequate **storage, cold-chain, and logistics infrastructure** reduces farmers' profitability.
- ▼ **Credit & Financial Constraints:** Despite expanding **institutional credit**, many small farmers rely on **informal lenders** and remain vulnerable to **debt**.

during crop failures.

▼ **Technology & Knowledge Gaps:** Limited access to

modern technologies, quality inputs, and scientific advisory services constrains **productivity and climate resilience**.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Income Support & Social Security:

PM-KISAN

- ♣ Launched in 2019 by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, it provides ₹6,000 annual income support through **DBT** to eligible farmer families, with more than 25% women beneficiaries, making it one of the **world's largest farmer welfare schemes**.

PM-Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY)

- ♣ Launched in 2019 by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, this voluntary contributory pension scheme provides **old-age income security through a monthly pension of ₹3,000 after the age of 60** to small and marginal farmers, strengthening social security and financial protection for the farming community.

Risk Management & Insurance:

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

- ♣ Launched in 2016 by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, PMFBY provides affordable crop insurance coverage against natural calamities, pests, and diseases, covering the entire crop cycle from **pre-sowing to post-harvest losses**.
- ♣ Benefitting around **24.31 crore farmers**, it strengthens agricultural resilience and risk mitigation.

Krishi Rakshak Portal & Helpline (KRPH- 14447)

- ♣ Launched under **PMFBY** by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, it provides a dedicated grievance redressal platform for crop insurance, supported by **around 500 executives nationwide** to ensure timely resolution, transparency, and accountability.

Irrigation, Soil Health & Sustainability:

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)

- ♣ Launched by the **Ministries of Jal Shakti, Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, and Rural Development**, it promotes **"Har Khet Ko Pani"** and **"Per Drop More Crop"** to improve irrigation and water-use efficiency, increasing irrigation coverage from **49.3% to 55%** of the gross cropped area.

Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme

- ♣ Launched by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, it promotes **scientific nutrient management** through soil-specific recommendations; nearly **26 crore Soil Health Cards** have been issued, supported by **8,313 soil testing laboratories**.

Organic & Natural Farming:

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)

- ♣ Launched in 2015 by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, it promotes organic farming through a **cluster-based approach**, covering 18.84 lakh hectares and benefiting 33.93 lakh farmers while encouraging sustainable, low-cost agriculture with reduced chemical use.

National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)

- ♣ Launched by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, NMNF promotes **chemical-free, sustainable farming**, covering **9 lakh hectares** and **19 lakh farmers**, improving soil health and ecological resilience.

Climate Resilience Initiatives:

- ♣ Implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and ICAR**, these initiatives promote **climate-smart agriculture** through stress-tolerant crops and adaptive farming practices, with **2,996 climate-resilient crop varieties** released and **448 climate-resilient villages** benefitting **8.5 lakh farmers**.

Credit, Markets & Infrastructure:

Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme

- ♣ Launched in **1998** and implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, KCC provides **affordable institutional credit** to farmers; operative accounts increased from **6.46 crore to 7.81 crore**, while credit outstanding rose from **₹4.26 lakh crore to ₹10.20 lakh crore**.

Technology & Institutional Reforms:

Digital Agriculture Mission

- ♣ Launched by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, it aims to build a **technology-driven agricultural ecosystem**; creating **7.63 crore Farmer IDs** and digitising **23.5 crore crop plots**, thus improving transparency and targeted service delivery.

Namo Drone Didi

- ♣ Launched by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, it promotes **drone-based agricultural services through Women SHGs**, creating technology-driven livelihood opportunities; with an approved outlay of **₹1,261 crore (2023–26)** to support drone adoption and women's empowerment.

Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)

- ♣ Launched by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**

Welfare to promote **collective farming, aggregation, and market access** for small and marginal farmers.

- ♣ With 10,000 **FPOs** registered by **February 2026**, it strengthened bargaining power and improved access to markets, inputs, and credit.

♣ Led by the **Ministry of Cooperation**, these reforms strengthen the **governance, transparency, and economic viability** of cooperative institutions.

- ♣ The **National Cooperative Database** covers over **8.4 lakh cooperatives**, and **61,866 PACS** have been digitized through **ERP-based national software**.

Cooperative Reforms

WAY FORWARD

- ✦ **Enhance Farmer Incomes:** Focus on **profitability rather than production alone** by promoting value addition, food processing, exports, and greater farmer participation in agricultural value chains.
- ✦ **Strengthen Climate Resilience:** Promote **climate-smart farming, drought-resistant crops, efficient irrigation, and natural farming**, while expanding **climate-resilient village models** to enhance adaptation to climate change.
- ✦ **Strengthen Market Access:** Expand **MSP procurement, e-NAM integration, and global market linkages**, while empowering **FPOs and cooperatives** to improve farmers' bargaining power and price realization.
- ✦ **Accelerate Technology Adoption:** Expand the use of **AI, drones, precision agriculture, satellite monitoring, and digital advisory services**, while scaling up the **Digital Agriculture Mission** to improve productivity and decision-making.
- ✦ **Promote Agricultural Diversification:** Encourage farmers to adopt **horticulture, dairy, fisheries, beekeeping, oilseeds, and pulses** to reduce dependence on crops, diversify risk, and create multiple income streams.

CONCLUSION

Government initiatives have significantly strengthened farmer welfare through improved income security, risk management, market access, and technological integration. Going forward, enhancing resilience, sustainability, and profitability will be key to empowering India's Annadatas and ensuring inclusive agricultural growth.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "Farmers are the backbone of India's food security, economic growth, and rural livelihoods." Discuss the importance of India's Annadatas and examine the major challenges affecting their welfare.
(15 marks) (250 words)

WEEKLY DOSSIERS

EL NIÑO AND INDIA'S MONSOON: ASSESSING THE RISKS OF A 'SUPER' EL NIÑO

NOAA has confirmed the onset of **El Niño** and estimated a **63% chance** of it intensifying into a "super" El Niño by late 2026, raising concerns over India's monsoon performance. El Niño is the abnormal warming of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, which weakens the Indian summer monsoon. Historically, it has been associated with droughts, agricultural losses, and economic disruptions in India.

IMPACTS ON INDIA

- ♦ **Weaker Monsoon:** Around 15 of the 24 El Niño years since 1950 witnessed below-normal rainfall, while about 10 resulted in drought-like conditions.
 - *Example:* Severe droughts in **1972, 1982, 2009, and 2015.**
- ♦ **Agricultural Stress:** Reduced rainfall and prolonged dry spells can affect kharif crops such as rice, pulses, and oilseeds.
- ♦ **Food Inflation:** Lower agricultural output may increase food prices and inflationary pressures.
- ♦ **Water Scarcity:** Reduced reservoir storage and groundwater recharge can intensify water stress.

- ♦ **Economic Impact:** Weak monsoons affect rural incomes, consumption, and overall economic growth.

Mitigating Factors

- ♦ A **positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)** can offset El Niño's adverse effects, as seen during the **1997–98 El Niño**, when India received above-normal rainfall.

WAY FORWARD

- ♦ Promote climate-resilient agriculture and drought-resistant crops.
- ♦ Strengthen weather forecasting and early-warning systems.
- ♦ Improve water conservation through micro-irrigation and rainwater harvesting.
- ♦ Expand crop insurance and disaster preparedness measures.

CONCLUSION

A super El Niño does not guarantee monsoon failure, but its strong historical correlation with rainfall deficits necessitates proactive planning to safeguard agriculture, food security, and economic stability.

DRUG-RESISTANT MALARIA: A CHALLENGE TO INDIA'S ELIMINATION GOAL

WHY IN NEWS?

- ♦ Experts have warned that the emergence of **drug-resistant malaria**, particularly resistance to **artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs)**, could undermine India's goal of eliminating malaria by **2030.**

INTRODUCTION

- ♦ Malaria, caused by *Plasmodium* parasites and transmitted by *Anopheles* mosquitoes, remains a major public health challenge. Although India has significantly reduced malaria cases and deaths in recent years, the rise of drug-resistant strains threatens to reverse these gains.

KEY CONCERNS

- ♦ **Emergence of Drug Resistance:** Mutations in the parasite's **Kelch13 (K13) gene** reduce the effectiveness

of artemisinin-based therapies.

- ♦ **Threat to Malaria Elimination:** Drug resistance can lead to delayed parasite clearance, treatment failure, and increased transmission.
- ♦ **Persistent Disease Burden:** India accounts for about **1.4% of the global malaria burden** and nearly **46% of the global *Plasmodium vivax* burden.**
- ♦ **Contributing Factors:** Misuse of antimalarial drugs, poor treatment adherence, counterfeit medicines, and insecticide resistance.
- ♦ **Climate Change Impact:** Expansion of vectors such as *Anopheles stephensi* and changing climatic conditions may increase malaria transmission.

WAY FORWARD

- ♦ **Strengthen molecular surveillance** to detect resistance mutations early.

- ◆ Ensure rational use and quality control of **antimalarial drugs**.
- ◆ **Expand vector-control measures** such as insecticide-treated bed nets and indoor residual spraying.
- ◆ **Promote malaria vaccination** and development of next-generation antimalarial drugs.
- ◆ **Strengthen community-based diagnosis** and treatment through ASHA workers.

CONCLUSION

- ◆ Sustained surveillance, innovation, and robust public health interventions are essential to prevent drug resistance from derailing India's progress towards malaria elimination by 2030.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION: COMPLEMENTARY GOALS, NOT COMPETING PRIORITIES

WHY IN THE NEWS?

- ◆ A recent study published in **Nature Sustainability** found that forests with higher poverty levels and greater dependence on fuelwood tend to have lower tree-species diversity, highlighting the link between livelihood security and biodiversity conservation.

INTRODUCTION

- ◆ Conservation has often been viewed through a "fortress model" that separates people from nature. However, emerging evidence suggests that poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation are mutually reinforcing goals. Sustainable livelihoods can reduce pressure on forests while strengthening ecological resilience.

KEY FINDINGS

- ◆ Forests with higher dependence on fuelwood and forest resources showed lower tree-species diversity.
- ◆ Communities with access to alternative livelihoods such as farming exhibited greater biodiversity.
- ◆ Around **275 million Indians** depend on forests for livelihood and daily needs.
- ◆ Poverty itself is not the cause of biodiversity loss; rather, limited livelihood options increase pressure on forest resources.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIA

- ◆ Supports a shift from exclusionary conservation to **community-based conservation**.
- ◆ Strengthens wildlife corridors and ecosystem resilience.
- ◆ Aligns with the objectives of the **Forest Rights Act, 2006** and sustainable development.
- ◆ Encourages integration of conservation with rural development.

WAY FORWARD

- ◆ Promote alternative livelihoods, ecotourism, agroforestry, and skill development.
- ◆ Expand access to LPG, clean energy, and efficient cooking technologies.
- ◆ Increase community participation in forest governance.
- ◆ Ensure a greater share of tourism and conservation benefits reaches local communities.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights that conservation and poverty reduction are not binary choices. Empowering forest-dependent communities through sustainable livelihood opportunities can simultaneously enhance biodiversity conservation and improve human well-being.

BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

National Task Force on Student Mental Health

- ◆ In 2025, the Supreme Court constituted a National Task Force (NTF) in *Amit Kumar v. Union of India* to address mental health concerns and prevent suicides in Higher Educational Institutions. The NTF noted that 75% of mental health conditions begin before the age of 24, students accounted for 7.6% of India's total suicides in 2022, and 65% of the 2,119 surveyed institutions lacked access to mental health professionals.

Article 329: Bar on Judicial Interference in Elections

- ◆ The Supreme Court dismissed a petition challenging the rejection of Rajya Sabha nominations, citing Article 329, which restricts judicial interference in electoral matters. It bars courts from questioning laws on constituency delimitation or seat allocation and allows an election to be challenged only through an election petition after the electoral process is completed.

Right to Walk on Footpaths: A Fundamental Right

- ◆ The Supreme Court has recognised the **right to walk safely on demarcated footpaths** as a fundamental right under Articles **19(1)(d)** and **21**, giving pedestrians priority over motor vehicles.
- ◆ In *Maniyar Iliyaz Shaik Riyaz v. P. Ayyappan*, the Court called for a dedicated law, quick remedies and a full-time regulatory body to protect pedestrian rights. It also asked the Centre and the Law Commission to examine an appropriate statutory framework and renamed the case **"Re Fundamental Right to Walk and Footpath"** for continued monitoring.

Section 69A: Power to Block Entire Digital Platforms

- ◆ In *Telegram FZ LLC v. Union of India*, the Delhi High Court upheld the Centre's power under **Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000**, to block an entire intermediary platform, not merely specific posts or channels.
- ◆ The Court held that the term "information" includes software, computer programs and applications. It also found Telegram's temporary blocking over NEET paper-leak concerns proportionate, as repeated content-level takedowns had failed and the procedure under the **2009 Blocking Rules** was followed.

Judicial Delay and Electoral Democracy

- ◆ Prolonged judicial delays in election and constitutional disputes can make even legally correct judgments democratically ineffective. The decade-long Radhapuram election case, along with disputes in Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana, shows how verdicts often arrive after governments or legislative terms have ended. Although Section 86(7) of the Representation of the People Act calls for election petitions to be resolved within six months, this deadline is frequently missed. Suggested reforms include a permanent electoral disputes bench, strict appeal timelines, automatic expiry of prolonged stays and greater transparency in pending election cases.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are the Municipal Commissioner of a rapidly developing city. As part of a major beautification and road-expansion project, the municipal authority plans to remove temporary shelters occupied by nearly 200 homeless families living beside a public road.

The families include elderly persons, children, pregnant women and daily-wage workers. Although their shelters obstruct pedestrian movement and create sanitation concerns, no proper rehabilitation facility is immediately available. Local residents support their removal, arguing that the area has become unsafe and unhygienic. Human-rights organisations, however, warn that eviction without rehabilitation would violate the dignity and basic rights of the homeless.

The State Government has directed you to complete the project before an upcoming international event. Some senior officials suggest carrying out the eviction at night to avoid protests and media attention.

Questions:

- Identify the stakeholders and ethical issues involved in this case.
- What options are available to you? Discuss their merits and limitations.
- How would you balance urban development, public safety and the rights of homeless families?
- What course of action would you adopt? Give reasons.
- Suggest long-term measures to address urban homelessness.

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- Leadership:** At just 24, Debangshi Chakma has built a 500-member collective in Mizoram's Lawngtlai district through Bodhibloom Society, enabling tribal women to earn livelihoods from handwoven textiles, bamboo products, traditional foods, and sustainable farming.
- Innovation:** Dr. Sudhanshu Shekhar Sahu, Dr. Manoj Nayak, and Santosh Swain developed a solar-powered cooking system combining a solar coil with induction cooking. Implemented at Golden Brew Café, Bhubaneswar, it stores surplus solar energy and enables cooking even after sunset or during cloudy weather. It reduces dependence on costly LPG cylinders, showing how scientific innovation can deliver sustainable and cost-effective solutions to real-world challenges.
- Environmental Ethics:** Neha and Shankar organised a sustainable wedding for over 2,000 guests by using digital invites, biodegradable cutlery and avoiding thermocol and plastic décor. Their two-day celebration diverted over 650 kg of waste from landfills, 20,000 plastic disposable items from entering the waste stream and composted around 250 kg of banana leaves.
- Sustainability:** Dr. Prasanna Jogdeo and Pooja Tendulkar founded Lemnion Green Solutions, which uses duckweed-based phytoremediation to treat 1–3,000 KLD of wastewater and rejuvenate polluted water bodies. Its Kamandalu River project in Maharashtra treats 6–8 lakh litres of sewage daily and improves water quality, showing how nature-based solutions can do sustainable environmental management.
- Social Responsibility:** Swami Prem Parivartan (Peepal Baba) through the Give Me Trees Trust, has led a large-scale, community-driven afforestation initiative that has restored vegetation across over 2.7 lakh hectares in 226 districts by planting and nurturing more than 25 million trees. His initiative focuses on ecological restoration rather than mere plantation by mobilising local communities to protect existing trees.
- Empathy:** Mohit Ahluwalia and Jagjyot Kaur quit their decade-long corporate careers in 2019 to found Raamae after discovering the global appreciation for India's traditional block-printing craft during a trip to Bali. By connecting artisans from Jaipur and Sanganer with modern markets, the venture preserves a 450-year-old art form, promotes sustainable production, and has grown from a ₹4 lakh investment to a business generating up to ₹18 lakh in monthly revenue.
- Digital Ethics/Fairness:** India temporarily suspended the Telegram in June 2026 ahead of the NEET re-examination to curb the spread of leaked question papers and organised exam malpractice, with the Delhi High Court upholding the restriction as a proportionate measure to protect exam integrity.

MODEL ESSAY

"Geography is the most fundamental factor in the foreign policy of states because it is the most permanent"

Introduction

- Quote by Nicholas Spykman
- Geography refers to a country's physical location, terrain, climate, resources, and spatial relations- Unlike political regimes or economic systems that change over time, it remains constant, making it the most enduring factor influencing foreign policy.

How Geography Shapes Foreign Policy

- **Location:** A country's location (coastal, landlocked, proximity to chokepoints) determines its trade routes, alliances, and security priorities. *Eg:* India's position in the Indian Ocean
- **Natural Borders:** Mountains, rivers, and deserts act as natural defenses or vulnerabilities, influencing defence strategies and relations with neighbours. *Eg* The Himalayas
- **Access to Resources:** Resource endowment (oil, minerals, water) drives foreign policy priorities like securing supply chains or expanding influence. *Eg:* Middle Eastern oil
- **Neighbourhood Dynamics:** Immediate neighbours significantly shape foreign policy through cooperation or conflict. *Eg:* India's "Neighbourhood First Policy".

Is Geography Still the Most Fundamental?

- **Economic Globalization:** Trade networks and global supply chains often override geographic limitations.
- **International Institutions:** Global governance structures influence state behaviour irrespective of geography.
- **Artificially Altering Geography:** China's "String of Pearls" and artificial islands—turning

geography from a constraint into a strategic tool.

- **Space as the New Frontier:** India's Chandrayaan and Aditya-L1 signal technological power and strategic presence in global commons.
- **Cyber Geography :**Control over digital infrastructure (data centers, undersea cables, 5G networks) is creating a new "virtual geography"

Way Forward

- **Tech + Geography Integration:** Blend geography with technology and economic power.
- **Global Commons Cooperation:** Strengthen rules for space, oceans, and cyberspace.
- **Climate-Adaptive Strategy:** Align foreign policy with climate-driven geographic changes.

Conclusion

- If geography is the most permanent factor in foreign policy, what happens when rising seas threaten to erase it altogether, as symbolized by the Maldives' underwater cabinet meeting?
- Ultimately, while geography has shaped global politics for millennia, our collective future depends on ensuring that the planet itself survives the Anthropocene.

Sample Quotes

- *The despotism of custom is everywhere the standing hindrance to human advancement. — John Stuart Mil*
- *Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic- Martin Luther King Jr*
- *The tyranny of a prince is not so dangerous to the public welfare as the apathy of a citizen in a democracy.- Montesquieu*

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS III: ENERGY

- The Finance Ministry imposed **Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED)** on diesel and Aviation Turbine Fuel exports amid the West Asian crisis.
- Also called a **windfall tax**, SAED is a flexible levy on domestic crude oil and exported petroleum fuels to discourage exports and ensure adequate domestic supply. It is imposed under the **Central Excise Act, 1944**, as crude oil, petrol, diesel and ATF remain outside the GST framework.



GS II: HEALTH

- Kerala is witnessing a rise in amoebic meningoencephalitis, with many recent cases linked to **Acanthamoeba**.
- Free-living amoebae are microscopic, single-celled organisms commonly found in water and soil.
- **Acanthamoeba** and **Balamuthia mandrillaris** cause Granulomatous Amoebic Encephalitis (GAE), while **Naegleria fowleri**, commonly called the “brain-eating amoeba,” causes Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM).



GS III: DEFENCE

- DRDO conducted three consecutive missile tests to validate India’s advanced ballistic missile defence and anti-ship strike capabilities. The maiden flight test of the Naval Anti-Ship Missile–Medium Range (NASM-MR) also successfully demonstrated maritime strike capability. India’s Ballistic Missile Defence Programme, launched in 1999–2000, uses endo-atmospheric and exo-atmospheric interceptors to counter threats such as ballistic and cruise missiles, aircraft and drones over ranges of about 30 to 5,000 km.

- Developed by DRDO, **Project Kusha** is a long-range indigenous surface-to-air missile system designed to protect India from aircraft, stealth platforms, drones, cruise missiles, precision-guided weapons and certain ballistic missile threats.
- Its three interceptor variants—M1, M2 and M3—have ranges of about 150 km, 250 km and 350–400 km respectively. Considered comparable to Russia’s S-400 system, it forms part of **Mission Sudarshan Chakra**, which aims to establish a multi-layered air and missile defence shield by 2035.



GS III: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- Indian and Japanese scientists used 22 years of data from the **GRAPES-3 muon telescope** to study Earth’s upper atmosphere and the Sun’s magnetic field.
- Located at Ooty, Tamil Nadu, at about 2,200 metres, GRAPES-3 detects extensive air showers produced when cosmic rays interact with atmospheric gases. It analyses secondary particles, including muons, to determine the properties of the original cosmic rays.
- Supported by the IndiaAI Mission and developed by Avataar, **Varya** is a distilled video-generation model designed to make advanced video AI more affordable, accessible and locally relevant.
- Using model distillation, it reduces video generation from about 50 steps to just four while maintaining comparable quality. This technique allows a smaller “student” model to learn from a larger “teacher” model, retaining its capabilities with less computation.



GS I: ART & CULTURE

- The **Masroor Rock-Cut Temples**, located in the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh, are an early 8th-century monolithic temple complex carved in the North Indian Nagara style. Facing the Dhauladhar range, the complex includes shikharas, a sacred water pool and three entrances, of which two remain incomplete.
- The temples are arranged symmetrically in a mandala pattern, with the main shrine surrounded by smaller temples. Their carvings depict major Vedic and Puranic deities and represent the Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shakta and Saura traditions of Hinduism. The complex was first reported by Henry Shuttleworth in 1913.
- Jharkhand's **Bhagaiya silk, Kuchai silk, Munda jewellery and bamboo craft** have received Geographical Indication (GI) tags. A GI tag, granted under the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**, protects products whose quality, reputation or unique features are closely linked to their place of origin.
- NCERT has decided to restore the original image of the Harappan **"Dancing Girl"** in its textbook. This 10.8-cm-tall bronze figurine from Mohenjo-daro belongs to the Indus Valley Civilization, dating to around 2600–1900 BCE. Discovered in 1926 during excavations led by John Marshall, it was made using the lost-wax casting technique and is preserved at the National Museum in New Delhi.
- India and China are discussing a joint UNESCO nomination for Xuanzang's travelogue, *The Great Tang Records on the Western Regions*.
- Xuanzang, also known as Hiuen Tsang, was a renowned Chinese Buddhist monk and scholar who travelled across India during his 16-year pilgrimage. He visited Harshavardhana's court, participated in religious debates at Kannauj and studied at Nalanda Mahavihara under the monk Shilabhadra.

CHERRY PICKS OF THE WEEK

SUPERNOVA

- It is a powerful explosion marking the final stage of a star's life. **Core-collapse supernovae** occur when a massive star exhausts its nuclear fuel and collapses under gravity. **Thermonuclear supernovae** occur in binary systems when a white dwarf undergoes an uncontrolled nuclear reaction, often after gaining matter from a companion star.

DROPSHIPPING

- It is an e-commerce model in which the seller does not maintain inventory. After receiving an order, the seller forwards it to a manufacturer, wholesaler or supplier, who stores, packs and ships the product directly to the customer. The dropshipper acts as an intermediary and earns through the price difference. Its main advantages are low start-up costs, minimal warehousing and no direct inventory management.

NANOGRAPHENE

- It is a molecule-sized fragment of graphene whose small size and exposed edges significantly influence its electronic, optical and chemical properties. It can exhibit a tunable band gap, semiconductor behaviour and photoluminescence. Major applications include optoelectronics, biomedical technologies and quantum devices.

REFERENDUM

- It is a form of direct democracy in which citizens vote to approve or reject a specific proposal. Depending on the relevant law or constitution, its result may be legally binding. The Indian Constitution does not expressly provide for referendums, as decisions are generally taken by elected representatives under the parliamentary system. **Switzerland** is well known for frequently using referendums.

BITUMEN

- It is a black or dark, solid or viscous material composed mainly of high-molecular-weight hydrocarbons. It is produced as a residue or by-product during crude oil refining through processes such as distillation and solvent extraction. Due to its strong adhesive, binding and waterproofing properties, as well as its relatively low cost, bitumen is widely used in road construction. It is also soluble in carbon disulphide.