

FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> ERP DOCTRINE > DELIMITATION AND WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL > AI IN GOVERNANCE

06th APRIL, 2025 - 12th APRIL, 2026

www.fortuneias.com

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.

I N D E X

AI IN GOVERNANCE	1
DELIMITATION AND WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL	3
DIPLOMACY IN MODERN WORLD	7
ESSENTIAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES (ERP) DOCTRINE	10
WEEKLY DOSSIERS	12
BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS	14
ETHICS - CASE STUDY	16
ETHICS - EXAMPLES	16
MODE ESSAY	17
MAINS JOT DOWN	18
CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK	20

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

W O M E N I N P O W E R

Congratulations

EMPOWERED BY
FORTUNE
IAS ACADEMY

+91 94950 15888 // +91 81389 40888

AI IN GOVERNANCE

Syllabus: GS II - e-Governance – applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Introduce the concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI). How does AI help clinical diagnosis? Do you perceive any threat to privacy of the individual in the use of AI in healthcare? (2023)

WHY IN NEWS

India launched the **Nyaya Setu Chatbot** on January 1, 2026, as a free WhatsApp-based legal assistance tool to improve access to justice and provide citizens with instant legal guidance.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into governance signals a paradigm shift from rule-based administration to **data-driven and algorithmic decision-making**, reshaping how the state functions and delivers services. While it promises greater efficiency, precision, and responsiveness, it also raises fundamental questions about democratic accountability and transparency.

SHORT TAKES

➤ IndiaAI Mission:

- o Launched in **March 2024 with an outlay of ₹10,372 crore**, seeks to **build a comprehensive AI ecosystem through seven pillars** including compute infrastructure, datasets, skilling, startup

financing, and safe & trusted AI.

- o It promotes **public-private partnerships** to democratise access to AI resources, develop indigenous foundational models, and drive innovation across sectors.

ABOUT NYAYA SETU APP

➔ Overview:

- o Nyaya Setu is an **AI-powered legal chatbot launched by the Ministry of Law and Justice (2026)** to improve access to justice.
- o It is integrated with **WhatsApp**, making legal help accessible through simple messaging.
- o Focuses on bridging the gap between **legal institutions and common citizens**, especially marginalized groups.

➔ Scope of Legal Assistance:

- o Covers multiple domains
 - » Civil disputes
 - » Criminal law
 - » Family and matrimonial issues
 - » Property and corporate matters

➔ Nature of Service:

- o Provides **preliminary legal information and guidance**, not a replacement for lawyers or courts.
- o Acts as a **gateway to professional services** like Tele-Law and pro bono lawyers.

ADVANTAGES OF AI IN GOVERNANCE

- ♣ **Efficiency and Speed:** AI-driven systems significantly reduce the time required for decision-making and service delivery.
- ♣ **Improved Accessibility:** By leveraging mobile-based platforms, AI ensures that government services are available **24/7**, thereby enhancing accessibility irrespective of location.
- ♣ **Greater Transparency and Accountability:** Digital systems create **traceable records of decisions and**

actions, which reduces corruption and enhances accountability within governance frameworks.

- ♣ **Cost-effectiveness:** AI reduces the need for extensive human intervention in routine tasks, thereby lowering administrative costs.

- ♣ **Citizen Empowerment:** By providing easy access to information and services, AI empowers citizens to be more **aware of their rights and actively participate in governance processes**.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

- ▼ **Data Privacy Risks:** The large-scale collection and processing of personal data by AI systems raise serious concerns regarding **data security, surveillance, and potential misuse**.
- ▼ **Algorithmic Bias and Fairness:** AI systems may replicate existing societal biases present in training data, which can lead to **discriminatory outcomes**.
- ▼ **Digital Divide:** Disparities in digital access and literacy may exclude vulnerable populations from benefiting


fully from such technologies.

- ▼ **Over-reliance on Technology:** Excessive dependence on AI may undermine human judgment and discretion, which are crucial in complex and sensitive domains.
- ▼ **Accountability and Legal Issues:** The “black box” nature of AI systems makes it difficult to determine responsibility for errors or adverse outcomes, raising questions about legal liability.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

-  **India’s AI Governance Guidelines (2025):** Establish a **seven-Sutra ethical framework based on a “Do No Harm” approach**, ensuring fairness, transparency, accountability, and protection against algorithmic bias in public AI systems.
-  **YUVA AI for All:** A free, **2-hour foundational AI course** launched by the Government of India under the IndiaAI Mission, **delivered via the iGOT Karmayogi platform**

to provide basic AI awareness, use cases, and ethical understanding for citizens, especially youth and public officials.

-  **BharatGen:** A government-backed sovereign AI initiative launched in 2024 to develop **multilingual, multimodal foundational models** tailored to India’s languages, culture, and governance needs.

WAY FORWARD

- * **Promoting Human-AI Synergy:** AI should be used as a **support tool rather than a replacement**, ensuring that human judgment remains central to governance and decision-making.
- * **Strengthening Data Protection Frameworks:** There is a need for robust legal and institutional mechanisms to ensure **data privacy, security, and ethical use of AI systems**.
 - o **Example:**Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023) mandates secure processing of personal data.
- * **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Governments must invest in digital infrastructure and literacy programmes to

ensure that the benefits of AI reach all sections of society.

- o **Example:** Bhashini platform enables vernacular, voice-based access to government services for non-literate users.
- * **Ensuring Ethical and Responsible AI:** The development and deployment of AI should be guided by principles of **fairness, transparency, accountability, and inclusivity**.
- * **Capacity Building and Training:** Public officials, judiciary, and law enforcement agencies must be trained to effectively use AI tools and adapt to evolving technological landscapes.

CONCLUSION

AI in governance, as reflected in initiatives like Nyaya Setu, represents a **double-edged transformation** that simultaneously expands state capacity and raises concerns about equity, accountability, and democratic oversight. The real test for India lies not in adopting AI, but in **governing AI effectively** through robust institutions, ethical frameworks, and inclusive digital infrastructure.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) How can Artificial Intelligence be leveraged to enhance transparency and accountability in government departments? Illustrate with suitable examples.
(10 marks) (150 words)

DELIMITATION AND WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL

Syllabus: GS II - Indian Constitution, historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *The reservation of seats for women in the institutions of local self-government has had a limited impact on the patriarchal character of the Indian Political Process." Comment. (2019)*

WHY IN NEWS

On April 17–18, 2026, the Lok Sabha debated the **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, the Delimitation Bill, 2026, and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, but the key amendment failed to pass.

INTRODUCTION

Delimitation and women's reservation together expose a **structural tension in India's representative democracy between population-based federal equality and corrective social justice**. While the former seeks to realign political power with demographic change, the latter attempts to rectify entrenched gender exclusion in legislative spaces.

SHORT TAKES

> Delimitation

- o The process of **redrawing the boundaries of Lok Sabha and State Assembly constituencies based on the latest population data (Census)** so that each elected representative represents a roughly equal number of people.
- o Delimitation was **frozen in 1976 by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment until after the 2001 Census** to avoid penalising states that had successfully controlled population growth in

terms of political representation.

- o After the 2001 Census, delimitation was carried out again through the **Delimitation Commission of 2002**, which redrew constituency boundaries but **kept the total number of Lok Sabha and State Assembly seats unchanged**.
- o The **84th Constitutional Amendment (2002) extended the freeze** on the total number of seats **until 2026**

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FOUNDATION

DELIMITATION

- ➔ **Article 82** : Enables the **parliament to pass a Delimitation Act after every Census**, to redraw Lok Sabha constituencies so that representation reflects population changes across states.
- ➔ **Article 170**: Provides for the **readjustment of territorial constituencies in State Legislative Assemblies** after every Census.
- ➔ **Article 327**: Gives **Parliament the authority to frame laws relating to elections**, including delimitation.
- ➔ **Delimitation Commission**:
 - o It is a **high-powered statutory body, usually headed by a retired Supreme Court judge**, which independently redraws constituency boundaries in coordination with the Election Commission to ensure neutrality.
 - o Delimitation commissions **have been set up in India four times** in the past under Delimitation Commission Acts of **1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002**.

- o As per existing law, the **next delimitation** exercise may be conducted after the **first census to be taken after the year 2026**.

➔ **Article 329**:

- o The **decisions of the Delimitation Commission are final and cannot be challenged in courts**, ensuring stability and preventing election-related litigation delays.

WOMEN'S RESERVATION

➔ **106th Constitutional Amendment Act (2023)**:

- o The act, also known as the **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam**, was passed in September 2023.
- o It provides for **33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies**.
- o The law was officially **notified into force on April 16, 2026**, through a gazette notification.
- o It inserted **Articles 330A, 332A, and 334A**, providing the legal framework for reservation of seats.

o **Key Structural Conditions**

- The implementation of women’s reservation is **not immediate under the 2023 Act**.
- It is linked to a **future delimitation exercise** which is tied to the **first Census conducted**

after 2026, due to the existing freeze on delimitation.

- As a result, the actual implementation is **automatically deferred for several years**, despite legal passage.

ABOUT THE CURRENT SCENARIO

📌 **Fast-Track Attempt**

- o The **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill 2026, Delimitation Bill 2026, and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill 2026** were introduced in the Lok Sabha on April 17, 2026 which proposes
 - using the **2011 Census data instead of waiting for a post-2026 Census**.
 - Initiating an **immediate delimitation exercise**.
 - Expanding the Lok Sabha strength to around **850 seats**.

📌 **Current Status and Outcome**

- o The **131st Amendment Bill failed to pass in the Lok Sabha** as it secured 298 votes in favour and 230 against, **falling short of the required two-thirds majority (352 votes)**.
- o The **2023 Act remains in force**, but its **actual**

implementation timeline remains delayed, pending future delimitation.

Opposition joins hands

Opposition parties defeated a Constitution Amendment Bill which sought to implement delimitation and increase Lok Sabha seats based on the 2011 Census

Category	Number of MPs	Share
In favour	298	56.4%
Against	230	43.6%
Abstentions	0	0%
Total present and voting	528	100%
Required (2/3 rd majority)	352	66.7%

OBJECTIVES OF THE LATEST BILLS

THE CONSTITUTION (ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

- 🌀 **Lifting the Delimitation Freeze:** It proposed **amending Article 82 of the Constitution** to remove the existing freeze on redrawing constituencies, which previously mandated waiting for the first census published after the year 2026.
- 🌀 **New Baseline Census:** Mandated use of **2011 Census data** as the official demographic baseline for delimitation instead of waiting for a new census.
- 🌀 **Expanding the Lok Sabha:** Proposed increasing Lok Sabha strength from **543 to 850 seats** to reflect population growth.
- 🌀 **Fast-Tracking Women’s Reservation:** Enabled immediate implementation of **33% women’s reservation (106th Amendment, 2023)** in newly delimited constituencies.

THE DELIMITATION BILL, 2026

- 🌀 **Constituting the Commission:** Authorized the Central Government to constitute a **Delimitation Commission**

for redrawing electoral boundaries.

- 🌀 **Redrawing Constituencies:** Directed redrawing of Lok Sabha and State Assembly constituencies based on **2011 Census data**.
- 🌀 **Women’s Seat Allocation:** Empowered identification, allocation, and rotation of constituencies reserved for women candidates.
- 🌀 **SC/ST Adjustment:** Required revision of SC/ST reserved seats in proportion to updated population distribution.

THE UNION TERRITORIES LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

- 🌀 **Amending Existing UT Acts:** It proposed necessary amendments to the **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act (1991), the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act (2019), and the Government of Union Territories Act (1963)**.
- 🌀 **Quota Synchronization:** Extended 33% women’s reservation and delimitation changes to legislatures of Delhi, Puducherry, and Jammu & Kashmir.

SIGNIFICANCE

Delimitation	Women's Reservation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures equal representation by redrawing constituencies based on population changes. Strengthens "one person, one vote, one value" by balancing population across seats. Improves efficiency and legitimacy of electoral representation. Reflects demographic changes in political structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures gender justice by increasing women's representation in legislatures Strengthens inclusive democracy by correcting historic underrepresentation of women. Ensures fair participation of women in decision-making bodies. Brings diverse perspectives in law-making and governance. Promotes gender equality and empowerment in politics.

CRITICISMS AND CONCERNS WITH THE BILLS

Concerns over Fast-Tracking Approach:

- The government argued that using 2011 Census data would fast-track women's reservation for the 2029 elections.
- Critics argued that linking it with seat expansion was unnecessary, as the **quota could be implemented within the existing 543-seat structure** without delimitation.

Bundled legislation issue:

Combining **delimitation, reservation, and UT reforms in one package** is seen as reducing legislative clarity and consensus-building.

Federal imbalance concerns:

The 131st Amendment Bill proposed expanding the Lok Sabha from 543 to 850 seats based on population **raising concerns among southern states that they would be penalised for population control** and lose political representation to northern states.

Political intent concerns:

Opposition parties argue the **reforms reflect political strategy** rather than purely gender equity or administrative necessity.

Limited Institutional Scope:

The women's reservation

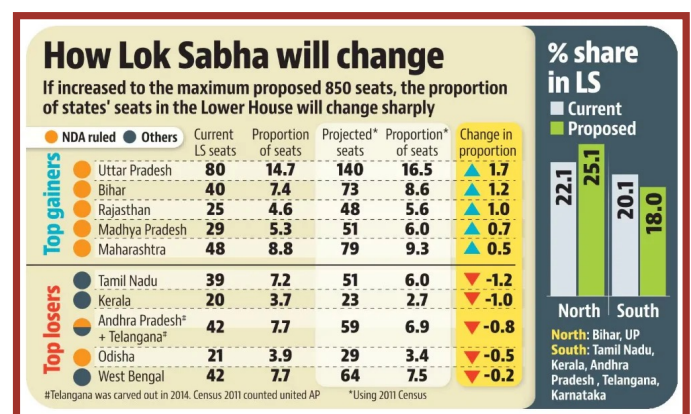
does not extend to the **Rajya Sabha or State Legislative Councils**, limiting its overall impact on legislative representation.

Absence of Sub-Quota:

The lack of a dedicated **sub-quota for Other Backward Classes (OBC) women** raises concerns about intra-gender equity.

Use of 2011 Census data:

Using **15-year-old data** to drastically redraw the electoral map in 2026 was **criticized as unscientific and blind** to recent demographic shifts, migration patterns, and urbanization.



WAY FORWARD

* **Separate Reservation from Delimitation:** Women's reservation should not depend on delimitation, as this **linkage creates avoidable delays in implementing a constitutionally guaranteed reform.**

* **Interim Implementation:** An interim arrangement using existing constituencies can ensure **immediate enforcement of 33% women's reservation.**

* **Fixed Timeline:** A clearly **defined and legally binding timeline** is needed to ensure that both delimitation and reservation reforms are implemented within a

predictable period.

* **Federal Balance:** Delimitation must be designed carefully to **ensure that states with lower population growth are not politically disadvantaged**, thereby protecting cooperative federalism.

* **Better Data Use:** The process should rely on **updated or blended demographic datasets** to ensure that constituency distribution reflects current population realities more accurately.

* **Political Consensus:** Broad-based **consultation across**

political parties is essential to build trust and avoid repeated legislative deadlocks

- * **Women's Empowerment Beyond Quotas:** Reservation should be complemented with **capacity-building, leadership training, and internal party reforms** to ensure meaningful political participation

of women.

- * **Legislative Clarity:** Instead of bundling multiple reforms in a single package, **each issue should be addressed through separate legislation** for better clarity and smoother passage.

CONCLUSION

The core policy challenge lies in implementing delimitation and women's reservation in a manner that **resolves the tension between federal proportionality and corrective representation** without weakening either principle. A balanced institutional design, backed by **political consensus and procedural clarity**, is essential to ensure that democratic expansion is both territorially fair and socially inclusive.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Examine the role of delimitation and women's reservation in shaping political representation in India's federal system.

(10 marks) (150 words)

DIPLOMACY IN MODERN WORLD

Syllabus: GS II - Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

PYQ MAPPING

Q) The Indian diaspora has a decisive role to play in the politics and economy of America and European Countries." Comment with examples. **(2020)**

Q) "The long-sustained image of India as a leader of the oppressed and marginalized nations has disappeared on account of its new found role in the emerging global order." Elaborate. **(2019)**

Q) Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UN Security Council. **(2015)**

WHY IN NEWS

Pakistan's reported back-channel diplomacy contributed to the April 8 ceasefire in the Iran–Israel–U.S. tensions in West Asia, helping pause fighting and ease tensions around the Strait of Hormuz.

INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy in the modern world has **evolved from secretive, state-centric negotiations to a complex, multi-actor process** shaped by globalization, technology, and interdependence. It now serves as a crucial instrument for managing conflicts, fostering cooperation, and addressing transnational challenges in an increasingly interconnected global order.

SHORT TAKES

➤ Backchannel diplomacy:

- Refers to **informal, unofficial, and often confidential communication** between parties (usually governments) that takes place outside formal diplomatic channels to facilitate negotiation or conflict resolution.
- It enables **discreet discussions in sensitive situations** where open diplomacy may be difficult or politically constrained.

TYPES OF DIPLOMACY

➔ Bilateral Diplomacy:

- Bilateral diplomacy involves **direct engagement between two states** through treaties, negotiations, and agreements to manage political, economic, and strategic relations and resolve disputes peacefully.
- **Example** The **US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement (2008)** that allowed for nuclear cooperation and trade.

➔ Multilateral Diplomacy:

- Involves **multiple countries cooperating through institutions like the United Nations** to collectively address global challenges such as climate change, security, and sustainable development.
- **Example** The **Paris Agreement (2015)** on climate change negotiated by 196 parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21).

➔ Economic Diplomacy:

- Focuses on advancing national interests through **trade agreements, investment flows, supply chain resilience, and financial cooperation** in an increasingly interdependent global economy.

- **Example** **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** where China invests in ports, railways, and highways across Asia, Africa, and Europe.

➔ Cultural (Soft Power) Diplomacy:

- Uses a country's **culture, values, language, and heritage** to build goodwill, shape international perceptions, and enhance long-term influence without coercion.
- **Example** **South Korea's "Hallyu" (Korean Wave)** where the government actively supports and promotes the export of K-pop (like BTS), K-dramas, and Korean cuisine.

➔ Digital/Data Diplomacy:

- Digital diplomacy leverages **social media, artificial intelligence, and data analytics** to conduct real-time communication, influence global narratives, and enhance decision-making in foreign policy.
- **Example** In 2017, **Denmark pioneered "techplomacy"** by appointing the world's first Tech Ambassador to Silicon Valley, elevating major tech companies to the status of sovereign diplomatic actors

➔ **Diaspora Diplomacy:**

- o Engages overseas communities to promote economic ties, cultural exchange, and political influence, thereby strengthening a country's global outreach.

- o **Example Pravasi Bharatiya Divas**, celebrated on January 9th, is a biennial government-sponsored event recognizing the overseas Indian community's contributions to India.

MULTITRACK DIPLOMACY FRAMEWORK

➔ **Louise Diamond** (a peacebuilding scholar and practitioner) and **John W. McDonald** (a former U.S. ambassador) developed the **Multi-Track diplomacy framework** and co-founded the **Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy in 1992**.

Note: The term **"Track 1.5 diplomacy"** was coined later by **Susan Allen Nan** and refers to a hybrid conflict-resolution approach blending official government (Track 1) and non-official/expert (Track 2) engagement



INDIA'S CONTEMPORARY DIPLOMATIC APPROACH

- 🇮🇳 **Strategic Autonomy (Multi-Alignment):** India engages multiple global powers while retaining independent decision-making based on national interest.
 - o **Example** India **continued buying discounted Russian oil** for energy security despite Western pressure during the Russia–Ukraine conflict.
- 🇮🇳 **Neighbourhood First Policy:** India prioritises ties with neighbouring countries through development, connectivity, and security cooperation.
 - o **Example** India **prioritized its immediate neighbors (like Bhutan, Nepal, and Bangladesh) for Vaccine Maitri** initiative delivering early shipments of COVID-19 vaccines.
- 🇮🇳 **Act East Policy:** India strengthens economic, strategic, and cultural engagement with Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific for regional integration.

- o **Example:** Ongoing construction of the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway (~1400 km)** aims to link India's northeast directly to ASEAN markets.
- 🇮🇳 **Global South Leadership:** India positions itself as a voice of developing countries, promoting equitable global governance.
 - o **Example** During its G20 Presidency in 2023, India hosted the **"Voice of Global South Summit"**.
- 🇮🇳 **Soft Power Diplomacy:** India uses culture, yoga, Ayurveda, and diaspora to build global goodwill and influence.
 - o **Example** The United Nations unanimously adopted India's resolution to declare June 21 as the **International Day of Yoga** (supported by 177 nations).

CHALLENGES

- ▼ **Geopolitical Rivalries:** Rising great-power competition increases polarization and makes diplomatic balancing harder.
- ▼ **Weak Multilateralism:** Global institutions are weakening due to nationalism and lack of consensus.
 - **Example** Paralysis of the UN Security Council during conflicts like the Russia–Ukraine war and the Israel–Hamas conflict.
- ▼ **Economic Uncertainty:** Trade wars, protectionism, and supply disruptions destabilise global relations.
- ▼ **Neighbourhood Instability:** Regional conflicts and political instability challenge diplomatic peace efforts.
- ▼ **Cyber Threats & Information Warfare:** Cyberattacks and misinformation complicate international security.
 - **Example** The **23 November 2022 ransomware attack on AIIMS Delhi**, suspected to be carried out by Chinese-linked hackers, affected around **five main servers of nearly 1.3 TB of data**.

WAY FORWARD

- * **Reforming Multilateral Institutions:** Reform global bodies to ensure fair representation, stronger legitimacy, and better effectiveness in addressing current global challenges.
 - **Example:** Campaign by the **G4 nations (India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan)** to secure permanent seats on the UN Security Council.
- * **Cooperative Diplomacy:** Prioritise dialogue, trust-building, and peaceful negotiation to manage complex international disputes.
 - **Example:** In March 2023, **China brokered an agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran** to normalize diplomatic relations, ending a seven-year rift.
- * **Responsible Tech Use:** Regulate AI and digital diplomacy through ethical norms, cybersecurity safeguards, and strong data protection.
 - **Example:** The **2023 Bletchley Declaration**, signed by 28 nations (including the US, China, and the EU), recognizes the need for international cooperation to manage potential existential risks from "frontier AI".
- * **Regional Cooperation:** Deepen regional integration via trade, connectivity projects, and cooperative frameworks for stability and growth.
 - **Example: African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** united 54 African countries into a single economic market.
- * **Soft Power & Public Diplomacy:** Strengthen global influence through culture, education, diaspora engagement, and people-to-people ties.
 - **Example:** International campuses of IIT Madras in Zanzibar (Tanzania) and IIT Delhi in Abu Dhabi (UAE).
- * **Balancing Interests:** Harmonise national priorities with global responsibilities like climate action and sustainable development for long-term stability.
 - **Example:** Establishment of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** by India and France.

CONCLUSION

In a world marked by geopolitical tensions and shared global challenges, effective diplomacy remains essential **for maintaining peace, stability, and sustainable development**. Strengthening inclusive, adaptive, and cooperative diplomatic frameworks will be key to navigating the complexities of the 21st century.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) “Diplomacy has evolved from bilateral statecraft to complex networked engagement.” Examine the key features of this transformation.

(10 marks) (150 words)

ESSENTIAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES (ERP) DOCTRINE

Syllabus: GS III - Defence

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Constitutional Morality is rooted in the Constitution itself and is founded on its essential facets. Explain the doctrine of 'Constitutional Morality' with the help of relevant judicial decisions. (2021)*

WHY IN NEWS

The Sabarimala Temple Entry Case is being reconsidered by a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India. The Centre has questioned the validity and workability of the Essential Religious Practices doctrine, reopening debates on religion versus rights.

INTRODUCTION

The Essential Religious Practices doctrine is a judicial tool used to determine which practices are protected under Article 25 of the Indian Constitution and Article 26 of the Indian Constitution. It attempts to balance religious autonomy with constitutional values like equality and reform.

EVOLUTION OF ERP DOCTRINE THROUGH CASE LAWS

1. Foundational Phase (1950s to 1960s)

- **Shirur Mutt Case (1954):** Religion includes beliefs and essential practices. The State can regulate secular aspects such as economic and administrative matters but not core religious practices. Essentiality must be determined from the doctrines of the religion itself.
- **Sardar Sarup Singh v State of Punjab (1959):** The ERP test was applied and lack of proof that a practice is essential led to State regulation being upheld.
- **Durgah Committee Ajmer Case (1961):** Superstitious or extraneous practices are not protected.
- **Syedna Taher Saifuddin Case (1962):** Essential practices are derived from texts and tenets and the State cannot destroy the identity of a religion.
- **Tilkayat Govindlalji Case (1963):** Only integral practices are protected while secular matters can be regulated.

2. Refinement Phase (1970s to 1990s)

- **Seshammal Case (1972):** Appointment of priests is a secular function while rituals are essential religious practices.
- **Kashi Vishwanath Temple Case (1997):** The State can regulate administration but not the religious core.

3. Modern Phase (2000s to Present)

- **Acharya Jagadisharananda Case (2004):** A practice is not essential if its removal does not fundamentally alter the religion.
- **Adi Saiva Sivachariyargal Case (2016):** Religious practices must conform to constitutional values like equality and non discrimination.
- **Shayara Bano Case (2017):** A practice must be core and mandatory and not merely permitted to be considered essential.

KEY CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

- ➔ **Article 25:** Guarantees freedom of conscience and religion, subject to public order, morality, and health.
- ➔ **Article 26(b):** Grants denominations the right to manage religious affairs.

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED IN THE CURRENT DEBATE

- 🔍 **Public Morality vs Constitutional Morality:**
 - Centre's stand Public morality (societal norms) should prevail in religious matters.
 - Court's earlier stance Constitutional morality (justice, equality, dignity) must dominate.
- 🔍 **Unworkability of ERP Doctrine:**
 - Difficulty in objectively identifying "essential" practices in a **diverse religious landscape**.
 - Leads to **judicial overreach into theological matters**.
- 🔍 **Religious Denomination Debate:**
 - Whether Ayyappa devotees form a separate

denomination remains contested.

- o Reference to Venkataramana Devaru Case (1958)
 - Allowed denominational rights
 - But **restricted exclusionary practices** in public temples

🕒 Temple Entry vs Autonomy:

JUDICIAL OBSERVATIONS

♣️ Justice B. V. Nagarathna emphasized:

- o **Universal access to temples**

SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIAN POLITY

- 🌞 **Secularism:** India does not follow strict separation like the West; instead, it follows *principled distance*, where the State can intervene in religion to ensure reform and equality while still respecting religious freedom.
- 🌞 **Judicial Role:** The Supreme Court of India has increasingly taken an active role in deciding what constitutes religion, thereby expanding judicial review into areas traditionally left to religious authorities.

CHALLENGES WITH ERP DOCTRINE

- ▼ **Subjective Interpretation by Judiciary:** There is no fixed test to determine what is “essential,” so judges often rely on their own reasoning, which can vary widely.
- ▼ **Inconsistent Judgments Across Cases:** Different benches have interpreted similar issues differently, leading to lack of clarity and predictability in law.

- o Tension between
 - **Right to equality (women’s entry)**
 - **Right of denominations to manage affairs**
- 🕒 **Indic vs Western Interpretation:**
 - o Centre advocated a “**swadeshi/Indic approach**” to constitutional interpretation rather than relying on Western jurisprudence.
 - o Exclusion harms the broader interests of Hinduism
- ♣️ **Concern:** Excessive denominational autonomy may **fragment society**.

- 🌞 **Social Reform:** Courts have used the ERP doctrine to strike down discriminatory practices and promote values like gender equality and dignity, as seen in cases like Shayara Bano Case (2017).
- 🌞 **Federal and Cultural Sensitivity:** India’s vast diversity of customs and traditions makes it difficult to apply a single uniform standard, requiring a flexible and context-specific approach in judicial decisions.

- ▼ **Risk of Courts Deciding Religious Theology:** By deciding what is essential, courts enter into theological questions, which they may not be institutionally equipped to handle.
- ▼ **Clash Between Group Rights and Individual Rights:** Denominational rights under Article 26 of the Indian Constitution can conflict with individual rights like equality and non-discrimination under Article 14.

WAY FORWARD

- ✦ **Develop Clearer Judicial Standards:** Courts should evolve objective criteria for determining essential practices to reduce arbitrariness and improve consistency.
- ✦ **Encourage Dialogue-Based Reforms:** Reforms should ideally come from within religious communities to ensure legitimacy and reduce resistance.
- ✦ **Balance Religious Autonomy with Fundamental Rights:** While protecting religious freedom, practices violating core constitutional values like equality and dignity should not be upheld.
- ✦ **Adopt a Context-Sensitive Approach:** Given India’s diversity, courts should avoid rigid frameworks and instead consider historical, cultural, and social contexts while deciding cases.

CONCLUSION

The Essential Religious Practices doctrine, while intended to protect religious freedom, has increasingly exposed its limits by placing courts in the role of arbiters of faith, making its continued use both constitutionally necessary and institutionally problematic.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q)“Critically examine the Essential Religious Practices (ERP) doctrine evolved by the Supreme Court of India in the context of balancing religious freedom and constitutional morality.” **(15 marks) (250 words)**

WEEKLY DOSSIERS

GLOBAL WARMING AND WEAKENING OF SEA BREEZE IMPLICATIONS FOR COASTAL CITIES

A recent study published in *Nature Climate Change* highlights an emerging impact of global warming - the weakening of sea land breeze systems in coastal cities such as Mumbai and Miami. This has serious implications for urban climate regulation and air quality.

What is Sea Land Breeze

Sea land breeze is a local wind system driven by temperature differences between land and sea. During daytime the land heats faster drawing cool air from the sea. At night land cools faster causing reverse airflow from land to sea

Impact of Global Warming on Sea Breeze

- ◆ **Reduced Thermal Contrast:** Global warming increases sea surface temperature. This reduces the temperature difference between land and sea. Weaker thermal gradient leads to weaker breeze formation.
- ◆ **Decline in Breeze Days.** Study shows around 3 percent reduction in sea breeze days already, observed across several coastal megacities.
- ◆ **Future Projections:** By 2050 sea breeze systems may weaken 4.5 times faster under high emissions. Risk of near collapse of this natural cooling mechanism in some regions.
- ◆ **Geographical Variation:** Mid latitude cities such as

London New York Shanghai and Buenos Aires show sharper declines.

Implications for Coastal Cities

- ◆ **Urban Heat Stress**
 - Sea breeze acts as a natural cooling system, weakening leads to higher urban temperatures and heat waves.
- ◆ **Air Pollution:** Reduced airflow limits dispersion of pollutants, leads to worsening air quality and health risks.
- ◆ **Urban Livability:** Sea breeze is crucial for comfort in dense coastal cities, its decline threatens habitability and increases energy demand for cooling.
- ◆ **Urban Planning Challenges:** Existing city designs assume presence of natural ventilation, weakening breeze calls for climate responsive planning

Conclusion

The weakening of sea land breeze is an overlooked but critical consequence of climate change. It highlights the need for integrating climate science into urban planning and strengthening mitigation efforts to reduce emissions and protect coastal city environments.

INDIA WITHDRAWS FROM HOSTING COP 33 STRATEGIC RECALIBRATION OR CLIMATE LEADERSHIP SHIFT

India has withdrawn its bid to host the 33rd Conference of the Parties in 2028 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The decision reflects a reassessment of national commitments while reaffirming its climate goals.

Background

- ◆ COP is the supreme decision making body under the UNFCCC
- ◆ Hosting rotates among regional groups and India belongs to the Asia Pacific group
- ◆ India had earlier expressed intent to host COP 33 at COP28 Dubai

- ◆ It has hosted COP only once earlier at COP8 New Delhi

Reasons for Withdrawal

- ◆ **Strategic and Logistical Considerations**
 - Government cited a review of commitments for 2028
 - Hosting COP involves significant financial administrative and diplomatic resources
- ◆ **Prioritisation of Domestic Climate Goals**
 - Focus may shift towards implementation of climate targets rather than global event management
- ◆ **Geopolitical and Diplomatic Balancing**

- o Space opened for other Asia Pacific countries like South Korea to host

India Climate Commitments

◆ Paris Agreement Performance

- o India among few G20 countries to meet its targets under the Paris Agreement

◆ Updated Nationally Determined Contributions

- o 60 percent installed electricity capacity from non fossil sources by 2035
- o 47 percent reduction in emissions intensity of GDP
- o Creation of additional carbon sink of 3.5 to 4 billion tonnes CO2 equivalent

Significance of the Decision

◆ Not a Retreat from Climate Leadership

- o India continues to project commitment to climate action
- o Shift from symbolic leadership to implementation

based leadership

◆ Implications for Global Climate Politics

- o May affect India visibility in global climate negotiations
- o Opens leadership space for other emerging economies

◆ Administrative Efficiency

- o Avoids diversion of state capacity from long term climate adaptation and mitigation projects

Concerns

- ◆ Missed opportunity to shape global climate agenda
- ◆ Reduced diplomatic leverage in climate negotiations

Conclusion

India's decision to withdraw from hosting COP 33 reflects a pragmatic recalibration rather than a dilution of ambition. In the evolving climate governance framework, effective implementation of commitments may carry greater weight than symbolic global leadership events.

VACCINE INJURY COMPENSATION IN INDIA BRIDGING PUBLIC HEALTH AND CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Vaccination is one of the most successful public health interventions, yet rare adverse effects raise questions of accountability. Following the Supreme Court's directive in *Rachana Gangu v Union of India 2026*, India faces an urgent need to institutionalise a fair compensation mechanism.

Context and Background

- ◆ India administered over 219 crore COVID 19 vaccine doses, making vaccination a collective social responsibility
- ◆ Adverse Events Following Immunisation recorded include thousands of serious cases and reported deaths
- ◆ Vaccination was often indirectly mandatory through institutional and workplace requirements

Nature of the Problem

◆ Rare but Real Risks

- o Serious adverse effects such as anaphylaxis thrombosis and encephalopathy are medically documented
- o Though statistically rare they impose

disproportionate burden on affected individuals

◆ Governance Deficit

- o Absence of a structured compensation framework reflects a gap in public health governance
- o Disproportionately impacts vulnerable groups lacking legal and financial resources

Inadequacy of Existing Legal Remedies

◆ Tort Law Limitations

- o Requires proof of negligence which is absent in most vaccine injury cases

◆ Consumer Protection Issues

- o Free vaccination weakens consumer provider relationship under Consumer Protection Act 2019

◆ Limits of PIL Mechanism

- o Public Interest Litigation can direct policy but cannot deliver individual compensation

Proposed Framework for India

- ◆ **Legislative Backing-** Enact a comprehensive Vaccine Injury Compensation Act.

- ◆ **No Fault Liability Principle:** Presumptive causation through a Vaccine Injury Table.
- ◆ **Institutional Mechanism:** Independent quasi judicial tribunal with medical expertise.
- ◆ **Dedicated Compensation Fund:** Joint funding by government and vaccine manufacturers.
- ◆ **Strengthening Surveillance:** Robust and transparent AEFI reporting system.

Significance of a Compensation Mechanism

- ◆ **Enhancing Public Trust:** Transparency and

accountability increase vaccine acceptance.

- ◆ **Strengthening Public Health Systems:** Encourages better pharmacovigilance and monitoring.
- ◆ **Balancing Individual and Collective Interests:** Ensures that costs of collective immunity are not unfairly borne by individuals.

Conclusion

A vaccine injury compensation framework is not merely a legal reform but a moral and constitutional imperative. By institutionalising no fault compensation, India can reinforce public trust, uphold equity, and strengthen the social contract underlying its public health system.

BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

Recusal of Judges

- ◆ Recusal of judges refers to the voluntary withdrawal of a judge from hearing a case due to a potential conflict of interest or perceived bias, in order to ensure fairness in judicial proceedings.
- ◆ It is rooted in the principle of rule against bias, which holds that no person should adjudicate a matter in which they have a personal interest. The practice aims to uphold judicial impartiality, maintain public confidence in the justice system, and ensure a fair trial.
- ◆ In India, there are no codified rules governing recusal, and it largely depends on the discretion of the judge. However, judicial precedents such as *Ranjit Thakur v Union of India (1987)* and *Chandraprabha v Union of India (2025)* have laid down guiding principles on the issue.

Right to Vote in India

- ◆ The Supreme Court of India has emphasized that the right to remain on the electoral roll and vote in one's country of birth is not only constitutional but also carries emotional and democratic significance. In India, the **right to vote and to be elected is a constitutional right**, forming the backbone of representative democracy.
- ◆ Key constitutional provisions include **Article 325 of the Indian Constitution**, which ensures that no person is excluded from electoral rolls on grounds of religion, race, caste, or sex, and **Article 326 of the Indian Constitution**, which provides for elections based on universal adult suffrage.
- ◆ Additionally, statutory backing is provided by the Representation of the People Acts-**Section 62 of the RPA, 1951**, which deals with the **right to vote**, and **Section 16 of the RPA, 1950**, which specifies **disqualifications for inclusion in electoral rolls**. Together, these provisions ensure inclusivity, fairness, and integrity in the electoral process.

Supreme Court on Illegal Sand Mining in National Chambal Sanctuary

- ◆ The Supreme Court of India has issued a strong warning against illegal sand mining in the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary, stressing urgent protection of its fragile ecosystem and endangered species like the gharial.
- ◆ The Court directed the States of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh to strengthen surveillance through CCTV installation on all mining routes and mandatory GPS tracking of vehicles and machinery.
- ◆ It emphasized that illegal sand mining poses a serious threat to biodiversity, river ecology, and governance, and warned that strict legal action will be taken in case of non-compliance.

Supreme Court on Role of High Courts as Guardians of District Judiciary

- ◆ The Supreme Court of India has cautioned that High Courts of India must act as **guardians of the district judiciary** rather than publicly castigating judicial officers in their orders.
- ◆ The Court observed a growing trend where High Courts make **adverse remarks or strictures** against subordinate judges while exercising powers under Article 227 of the Constitution of India, which is inconsistent with their institutional role.
- ◆ It emphasized that such remarks can **damage careers and demoralize the judiciary**, and that supervisory powers should be used to **guide and nurture, not oppress**. The Court recommended **in-house administrative mechanisms** (like remark slips reviewed by senior judges) instead of harsh judicial criticism.
- ◆ It also held that **cancellation of bail after long delays on technical grounds is unjustified**, as it directly affects personal liberty and must be based on strong reasons.

Supreme Court on Dowry-Giving Prosecution

- ◆ The Supreme Court of India has held that a wife and her family **cannot be prosecuted for 'giving dowry'** based solely on statements made in their complaint against the husband for demanding or taking dowry under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.
- ◆ The Court clarified that under Section 7(3) of the Act, such statements are **protected** as they are made by "persons aggrieved," and using them to initiate prosecution would defeat the purpose of the law.
- ◆ It rejected the husband's attempt to file a counter-case, emphasizing that the law intends to **protect victims, not penalize them** for reporting dowry harassment. However, the Court noted that if there is **independent evidence** of dowry-giving beyond such statements, prosecution may still be possible.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) Meera is a District Collector in a mineral-rich region where a major infrastructure project has been approved to boost economic growth, energy security, and employment generation. However, the proposed site lies within a forest area inhabited by tribal communities who depend on the land for their livelihood, culture, and identity. Although the project has received environmental clearance, several concerns have emerged- many tribal families allege they were not properly consulted, violating the spirit of the Forest Rights Act, 2006; the Gram Sabha consent process appears to be manipulated; and displacement threatens loss of livelihood, cultural erosion, and ecological imbalance. Activists have also warned of long-term injustice and potential social unrest. At the same time, the State government is under pressure to fast-track the project in the name of national interest and investor commitments, and Meera has been instructed to ensure smooth land acquisition while maintaining law and order, placing her in a complex ethical dilemma between development imperatives and the rights and dignity of vulnerable communities.

- a. What are the key ethical issues and dilemmas in this case?
- b. Identify the stakeholders and analyse their competing interests.
- c. What are the options available to Meera? Critically evaluate each.
- d. What course of action should Meera adopt? Justify using ethical principles like justice, equity, and public interest.
- e. Suggest institutional safeguards to balance development with tribal rights and environmental sustainability.

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- 1. Technology Ethics:** States like Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh (Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve), and Karnataka (Bandipur Tiger Reserve) have deployed AI-enabled thermal systems to track elephants, identify conflict-prone animals, and detect poaching and forest fires.
- 2. Innovation:** Abhishek Baheti created independent smartwatches with GPS tracking, 4G calling, SOS alerts, and anti-removal sensors after losing his niece and uncle in a house fire due to lack of timely communication. The device, priced around ₹6,000–₹10,000, is used by over 3,000 customers across India.
- 3. Social Responsibility:** Anoop Chugh and Jasmine Kaur left their city jobs to start 'Kahaani ki Dukaan' in Gunehar, Himachal Pradesh, promoting creativity among rural children through storytelling, art workshops, and a mobile library that has distributed over 2,000 books across 30 villages. Their initiative now engages around 80 children regularly and has trained nearly 2,000 kids in art, music, and theatre.
- 4. Perseverance:** Aarav Vats, a Class 10 student from Delhi, scored 96.6% in CBSE exams while battling lymphoblastic lymphoma, continuing his studies through hospital stays, chemotherapy cycles, and online support from teachers.
- 5. Resilience:** Jaikishaan Sharma lost his job in 2015, and then suffered a spinal injury in a car accident that left him paralysed, battling depression, suicide attempts, and mounting debt while supporting his wife and newborn. He defied a 5% walking chance, walked again by 2020, repaid a \$75,000 debt, and became an international speaker and founder of DreamChair Club.
- 6. Environmental Ethics:** Mani Vajipey, disturbed by India's plastic waste, left his corporate career with Raj Madangopal to co-found Banyan Nation in 2013, focusing on large-scale plastic recycling. Today, it processes 1,000–1,200 tonnes monthly, has recycled over 1 lakh tonnes, and supplies high-quality recycled plastic to companies like Hindustan Unilever, Shell, HPCL, and Reckitt.
- 7. Compassion/ Leadership:** Malati Murmu, a tribal homemaker in Purulia's Ayodhya Hills, started a home classroom after the 2020 lockdown, going door to door with her baby to bring school dropouts back despite resistance. Her effort now runs as a two-room mud school with 45+ students (Classes 1–5), where she teaches in Santali, Bengali, and English for first-generation learners.
- 8. Public Health Ethics:** A 38-year-old tribal man from Wayanad died after consuming 'arishtam'—a traditional Ayurvedic fermented herbal tonic often used as an alcohol substitute—allegedly mixed with intoxicants. Police shut an unlicensed outlet after locals alleged it was being sold without prescription or supervision, and sent samples for testing.

MODEL ESSAY

"The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom."

Introduction

- Quote by Isaac Asimov
- In the 21st century, we are living in an **"information explosion" era**, yet crises show a deficit of wisdom in decision-making.

Rapid Growth of Scientific Knowledge

- **Exponential Innovation:** Breakthroughs in AI, biotechnology, and space science are happening at unprecedented speed.
- **Fact:** Around **90% of global data has been generated in just the last decade**, reflecting explosive knowledge creation.

Slow Growth of Social Wisdom

- **Wisdom Requires Time:** Ethical norms, regulations, and social understanding evolve slowly compared to technology.
- **Information ≠ Understanding:** Access to information does not ensure rational or ethical use.

Examples

- **Climate Change:** Science clearly warns about global warming-Yet **global CO₂ emissions hit record highs (≈37 billion tonnes in 2023)**.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** Vaccines developed in record time- Yet **vaccine hesitancy and misinformation slowed public health response**.
- **Genetic Engineering (CRISPR):** Achieved the ability to edit DNA - Ethical consensus on "designer babies" remains unclear.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** Rapid AI growth- Lack of strong global regulations on **deepfakes, bias, and job loss**.

Consequences of the Gap

- **Technological Misuse:** Rise in cybercrime, surveillance abuse, and weaponization of

technology.

- **Governance Failures:** Delay in acting on scientific warnings (climate, pandemics).
- **Social Polarization:** Algorithms amplify biases, creating echo chambers despite factual knowledge.
- **Techno-Solutionism:** Overreliance on technology to solve complex social problems.
- **Widening Inequality:** Tech benefits concentrate among elites, marginalizing others.

Way Forward

- **Promote Scientific Literacy:** Equip citizens with critical thinking and evidence-based reasoning.
- **Integrate Ethics with STEM:** Include philosophy, ethics, and social sciences in education.
- **Strengthen Regulation:** Timely laws for AI, biotechnology, and data protection.
- **Encourage Responsible Innovation:** Align technological growth with sustainability and human welfare.
- **Democratic Governance:** Include citizens in decisions on AI, biotech, and digital systems.

Conclusion

- The real tragedy is not lack of knowledge, but **failure to use it wisely**.
- Bridging this gap requires combining **science with ethics, responsibility, and human values**.

Sample Quotes

- *The worst illiterate is the political illiterate - Bertolt Brecht*
- *To educate a person in the mind but not in morals is to educate a menace to society- Theodore Roosevelt*
- *Foreign policy is really domestic policy with its hat on. — Hubert H. Humphrey*

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS III: CLIMATE CHANGE

- A study by the National Institute of Science Education and Research reveals that **climate shocks are increasingly driving poverty in India**, based on an analysis of **593 districts across 21 states**.
- The findings show a growing **link between climate variability and economic vulnerability**, highlighting the need for **urgent policy intervention**. NISER, an **autonomous institute under the Department of Atomic Energy**, plays a key role in advancing such research on science-policy linkages.



GS III: INDIAN ECONOMY

- In its latest *World Economic Outlook (WEO)*, the International Monetary Fund has **slightly raised India's GDP growth forecast to 6.5% for FY27**, indicating continued resilience despite global uncertainties.
- However, **global growth is expected to slow to 3.1% in 2026 and 3.2% in 2027**, reflecting broader economic headwinds. Notably, India has **slipped to the 6th position in nominal GDP rankings**, behind the United States, China, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom.



GS III: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

- The Centre is advancing **Project Him Sarovar** to ensure year-round water security in Ladakh.
- The initiative focuses on conserving snowmelt and rainwater by creating artificial water bodies, aiming to address chronic water scarcity in the region.
- It targets the development of 50 such water bodies, based on local experience, to ensure continuous water availability and support irrigation for farmers.



GS III: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- India's first quantum computing testing facility has been launched at SRM University in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, marking a major step in advancing quantum research and innovation in the country.
- The launch coincided with World Quantum Day, which is celebrated on April 14 because the date (4/14) represents the first three digits of Planck's constant, a fundamental constant that underpins quantum physics.



GS III: DEFENCE

- The Indian Army has departed for the 7th edition of Exercise **Dustlik**, a joint military exercise between India and Uzbekistan.
- It is an annual event held alternately in both countries and aims to strengthen military cooperation and enhance the ability of both forces to conduct joint operations, particularly in semi-mountainous terrain.



GS II: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- The United Nations Development Programme report highlights that West Asian conflicts could significantly impact India, with **South Asia facing the highest losses**.
- Nearly **2.5 million Indians may fall into poverty**, while rising gas prices are **weakening the rupee and increasing coal use**, worsening pollution. India's heavy dependence on the region, **40% oil and 90% LPG imports**, makes it vulnerable.
- **Trade worth \$48 billion** is at risk due to disruptions, and **agriculture may suffer** as over **45% of fertilizers and LNG for urea** come from West Asia, threatening the **Kharif season**. Additionally, **9.37 million Indian workers in the Gulf** face uncertainty, endangering **38–40% of remittance inflows**.



GS II: GOVERNMENT POLICIES & INTERVENTIONS

- **Project HIM SAROVAR** is a Central initiative aimed at ensuring **year-round water security in Ladakh** by conserving **snowmelt and rainwater** through the creation of water bodies.
- The project targets the **development of 50 such water bodies**, based on local experience, to **address water scarcity and support irrigation for farmers**, especially in the region's harsh climatic conditions.
- The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation achieved its **highest-ever annual disbursement of ₹613 crore in FY 2025–26**, reflecting an expansion in support for backward communities.
- The corporation aims to **promote economic development among Backward Classes**, with a focus on **uplifting poorer sections through skill development, self-employment, and income-generating activities**.



GS I: GEOGRAPHY

- A recent study has identified **219 unstable hanging glaciers** in the Alaknanda basin, highlighting significant avalanche risks in the region.
- **Hanging glaciers** are those that **end abruptly on steep slopes or cliffs rather than extending into valleys**, making them structurally fragile.
- Unlike valley glaciers that move gradually, they **transfer ice mainly through sudden icefalls and avalanches**, which increases their **inherent instability and hazard potential**, especially in mountainous terrains.
- The India Meteorological Department has predicted heatwave conditions across several states, based on its defined temperature thresholds.
- A **heatwave is declared** when temperatures exceed **40°C in plains, 37°C in coastal areas, and 30°C in hilly regions**. It is further classified using two criteria- **departure from normal temperature**, where a **heatwave ranges from +4.5°C to +6.4°C** and a **severe heatwave exceeds +6.4°C**, and **actual maximum temperature (plains only)**, where **≥45°C indicates a heatwave** and **≥47°C denotes a severe heatwave**.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

HUBBLE TENSION

- It refers to the mismatch between the rate at which the Universe is expanding as measured from nearby galaxies in the present-day Universe and the slower rate predicted from observations of the early Universe, particularly from the Cosmic Microwave Background, which represents relic radiation from shortly after the Big Bang.

TRANSITION METALS

- They are d-block elements that act as a bridge in the periodic table and show variable oxidation states.
- They are hard, lustrous, good conductors with high melting points, and are widely used as catalysts in industrial processes (e.g., palladium, platinum).

GLUFOSINATE

- It is a broad-spectrum, non-selective contact herbicide used for weed control and often serves as an alternative to glyphosate.
- It works by inhibiting the enzyme glutamine synthetase, disrupting nitrogen metabolism and causing toxic ammonia buildup that kills plants.
- However, it poses risks to aquatic life, non-target plants, and may contaminate water sources.

SEMAGLUTIDE

- It is a medication belonging to the class of GLP-1 receptor agonists, which mimic the natural GLP-1 hormone to regulate blood sugar levels and appetite.
- It is used in the treatment of Type 2 diabetes, weight management, and certain kidney and cardiovascular conditions. It can be administered either as an injection or in tablet form, and is marketed under brand names like Ozempic, Wegovy, and Rybelsus.

MEMRISTOR

- It is a novel electronic component inspired by biological synapses that can store and process data in the same place, enabling efficient signal transmission and reducing energy use in AI systems by over 70 percent while operating at very low currents