

# FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> ALL INDIA LABOUR STRIKE > REMOVAL MOTIONS IN PARLIAMENT > INDIA MALAYSIA RELATIONS

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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**

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AIR 522

**MANJIMA P**  
AIR 235

**KASTURI SHA**  
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**FABI RASHEED**  
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**OORMILA J S**  
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# REMOVAL MOTIONS IN PARLIAMENT

*Syllabus: GS II - Parliament and State legislatures*

## PYQ MAPPING

- Q)** Discuss the role of Presiding Officers of state legislatures in maintaining order and impartiality in conducting legislative work and in facilitating best democratic practices. **(2023)**
- Q)** To what extent, in your view, the Parliament is able to ensure accountability of the executive in India? **(2021)**
- Q)** ‘Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker’! Do you think this practice should be adopted to impart objectivity to the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha? What could be its implications for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India? **(2020)**
- Q)** The ‘Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and its Members’ as envisaged in Article 105 of the Constitution leave room for a large number of un-codified and un-enumerated privileges to continue. Assess the reasons for the absence of legal codification of the ‘parliamentary privileges’. How can this problem be addressed? **(2014)**

## WHY IN NEWS

The Opposition has moved a **resolution to remove Om Birla as Speaker, while a substantive motion has been initiated against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi**, demanding that his Lok Sabha membership be cancelled and that he be debarred from contesting elections for life.

## INTRODUCTION

Recent removal and disciplinary motions in the Parliament of India have brought renewed attention to constitutional safeguards governing key parliamentary offices. These developments raise important questions about institutional neutrality, accountability, and the balance between majority power and opposition rights.

## SHORT TAKES

### ➤ Substantive Motion

- A **motion** in parliamentary terms is a **formal proposal** made by a member **requesting the House to take a specific action, issue an order, or express its opinion** on a matter.
- It is framed in such a way that the House can adopt it as its decision.
- A **substantive motion** is an independent and self-contained proposal placed before the House for approval, intended to convey a definite decision.
- Examples include **resolutions**, the **motion for the election** of the Deputy Chairman in the Rajya Sabha, Adjournment motions on matters of urgent public importance and the **Motion of Thanks** to the President’s Address.
- **Matters involving the conduct of persons holding high offices** must also be raised through a proper substantive motion.
- Substantive motion is governed by the **Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business** in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- It can be moved by **any Member of Parliament** (the same person must have submitted it), including ministers, after giving **proper notice and obtaining the permission** of the Speaker (Lok Sabha) or Chairman (Rajya Sabha).
- If admitted, the motion is put to vote to reflect the will of the House and If passed, it becomes the **formal opinion or resolution** of the House.

## RECENT REMOVAL MOTIONS IN PARLIAMENT

### SPEAKER

#### About

#### 📌 Constitutional Position

- The **Speaker of the Lok Sabha** is the *presiding officer* of the lower house, elected by all its members.
- The office is a **constitutional position** under **Article 94** of the Constitution.
- The Speaker’s duties include *presiding over debates, maintaining order, deciding points of procedure*, and *protecting the rights of all members*.

- o The Speaker can constitute enquiry committees to investigate misconduct by members and place findings before the House.

#### ☞ **Neutrality and Tradition**

- o Though a member of a political party, once elected Speaker traditionally relinquishes active party politics to ensure **impartiality**.
- o This neutrality is crucial for upholding parliamentary norms and ensuring fair deliberations.

#### ☞ **Casting Vote**

- o The Speaker votes only to *maintain the status quo* in case of a tie which is a safeguard against influencing outcomes by partisan majorities.

#### ☞ **Constitutional Procedure for Removal**

- o Article 94(c) provides that the Lok Sabha may remove the Speaker through a resolution passed by a majority of all the then members of the House.
- o A **mandatory 14-day notice period** is required.
- o During consideration of the motion, the Speaker

does not preside.

- o The Deputy Speaker or another member chairs the sitting.
- o The Speaker may participate in debate as a member but cannot exercise a casting vote on the motion.
- o Passage requires a majority of total House strength.

#### **Recent Removal Motion Against Speaker**

- ☞ In February 2026, the *Opposition parties* submitted a **no-confidence motion** seeking the **removal of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla**.
- ☞ The motion was moved under Article 94(c) of the Constitution with signatures of around **118–120 opposition MPs**.
- ☞ The Opposition accuses the Speaker of **“blatant partisanship” and biased conduct**, particularly in limiting Opposition voices during crucial debates.
- ☞ Such motions are **extremely rare**; the last attempt before this was in **1987**. All previous motions failed to remove the Speaker, making this both *rare and constitutionally significant*

## MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

### **About**

- ☞ A **Member of Parliament (MP)** represents the electorate in the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha and participates in law-making, debate, and oversight of the government.
- ☞ MPs also serve on committees, raise constituency issues, and uphold parliamentary privileges and ethics.
- ☞ All MPs are expected to follow parliamentary norms, maintain decorum, and abide by legislative rules of procedure and conduct.
- ☞ Misconduct, misconduct allegations, or misuse of privilege can lead to disciplinary proceedings by House committees.

### **Removal and Disqualification of MP**

#### ☞ **Parliamentary Expulsion**

- o MPs may be **expelled from the House** on the basis of serious misconduct, usually upon recommendation by ethics/privileges committees and a voting resolution in the House.

#### ☞ **Disqualification Under Law**

- o Under the **Representation of People Act**, MPs

can be disqualified for certain convictions or if they contravene anti-defection provisions.

- o **Example:** Rahul Gandhi was disqualified briefly in March 2023, following a conviction in a defamation case by a lower court; he was reinstated after the SC stayed the sentence in August 2023.

#### ☞ **Substantive Motion Mechanism**

- o A “substantive motion” is sometimes used to address serious allegations against an MP; if adopted, it may lead to expulsion or referral to a committee for detailed inquiry.

#### o **Illustrative Instances**

- o **Cash-for-Query case (2005):** After an inquiry, the Lok Sabha adopted a substantive motion **expelling 10 MPs** for unethical conduct
- o **MPLADS Misconduct Case (2006):** Inquiry committee report led to reprimand and suspension of MPs through a substantive motion.
- o **Babubhai Katara Case (2008):** Member expelled after committee found grave misconduct in passport misuse case.

## LEADER OF OPPOSITION (LOP)

### About

#### ☞ Constitutional and Parliamentary Importance

- The Leader of Opposition is the leader of the **largest non-government party** in Parliament and is important for *legislative scrutiny* and *executive oversight*.
- Though not a constitutional office with explicit safeguards, the position is **statutorily recognised in parliamentary procedures** and in bodies like selection committees for key appointments.

#### ☞ Voice of Opposition

- The LoP acts as the principal spokesperson for the Opposition, *questioning government policies*, raising issues of public concern, and ensuring dissent is represented in debates.

- A strong LoP is considered vital for a healthy parliamentary democracy.

### Recent Removal Motion Against LoP

- ☞ In early **February 2026**, BJP MP **Nishikant Dubey** initiated a *“substantive motion”* in the Lok Sabha targeting **Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition**.
- ☞ The motion alleges *“unethical conduct”* and seeks his **expulsion and disqualification as an MP**, potentially cancelling his membership and barring him from future elections.
- ☞ The motion was formally communicated to Speaker Om Birla for consideration of a parliamentary probe.
- ☞ The motion has sparked sharp political debate, with critics arguing that it *equates dissent with disloyalty* and threatens democratic accountability.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- ☀ **Institutional Accountability:** Removal motions convey *parliamentary accountability* and highlight Parliament’s role not just as a legislative body but as an institution of checks and balances.’
- ☀ **Protest and Political Messaging:** Even where numerically unlikely to succeed, such motions serve as **political protests** and signal dissent, documenting

opposition grievances for the parliamentary record.

- ☀ **Protection of institutional integrity:** Reinforces ethical standards and discipline within legislative functioning.
- ☀ **Democratic legitimacy:** Ensures that decisions on misconduct arise from deliberation and voting rather than unilateral action.

## CHALLENGES

- ▼ **High Thresholds:** Parliamentary norms require strict notice periods, specified majorities, and adherence to procedure; missteps can delay or derail motions.
  - **Example:** Removing a Speaker requires a **majority of all members**, not just those present and voting, making such motions *difficult to pass*, especially against ruling alliance strength.
- ▼ **Partisan Polarisation:** Critics contend that these motions may be deployed more as *political tools* than principled accountability, risking deeper polarisation.

- ▼ **Risk of erosion of parliamentary conventions:** Frequent confrontational use may weaken traditions of restraint and mutual respect.
- ▼ **Balancing accountability and free speech:** Ensuring discipline without undermining legitimate dissent is a continuing challenge.
- ▼ **Public perception concerns:** Highly politicised proceedings may affect trust in parliamentary institutions.

## WAY FORWARD

- ✦ **Strengthening procedural safeguards:** Ensure objective scrutiny through robust committee processes and evidence-based decision-making.
- ✦ **Reinforcing institutional neutrality:** Uphold traditions of impartiality in presiding offices and disciplinary proceedings.
- ✦ **Promoting constructive parliamentary engagement:** Encourage debate, dialogue, and consensus-building over adversarial confrontation.

- \* **Protect Legitimate Dissent:** Distinguish between misconduct and *legitimate parliamentary dissent*, ensuring disciplinary mechanisms do not stifle debate.
- \* **Procedural Clarity:** Codify best practices for handling removal motions to prevent misuse and enhance institutional credibility.
- \* **Enhancing public trust:** Transparent procedures and reasoned decisions can strengthen institutional legitimacy.

## CONCLUSION

While such motions reflect the functioning of democratic accountability mechanisms, their frequent or partisan use risks weakening trust in parliamentary conventions and procedures. Strengthening impartiality, procedural fairness, and constructive dialogue remains essential to preserve the credibility and effectiveness of India's parliamentary democracy.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** Substantive motions reflect the will of the House while also being instruments of political accountability. Examine.  
**(10 marks) (150 words)**

# CONSUMER PRICE INDEX REVISION

*Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy*

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q)** Do you agree with the view that steady GDP growth and low inflation have left the Indian economy in good shape? Give reasons in support of your arguments. (2019)

## WHY IN NEWS

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has released the new Consumer Price Index (CPI) series with base year 2024, reporting retail inflation at 2.75% for January. Chief Economic Advisor **V. Anantha Nageswaran** termed the revision an important development, stating that inflation signals will now better reflect prevailing economic realities.

## INTRODUCTION

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is India's most important macroeconomic indicator as it measures retail inflation and forms the basis of monetary policy decisions by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

### Why the Upgrade Was Overdue

Over the past decade, **India has seen:**

- Rapid expansion of the service sector
- Growth of digital platforms and online marketplaces
- Structural welfare interventions (e.g., free foodgrain distribution to about 80 crore beneficiaries)
- Changing household expenditure patterns

An **inflation index based on 2011–12 consumption could no longer accurately reflect** present realities. The revision was not cosmetic, it was necessary.

- To capture these changes, **MoSPI** has revised:

- » Base Year: From 2012 to 2024
- » Consumption Basket: Based on the 2023–24 Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)
- » Classification Framework: Adopted international COICOP 2018 standards

This revision aims to improve accuracy, representativeness, and global comparability.

**Note:** Consumer Price Index (CPI) is released by the **National Statistical Office (NSO), under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) is released by the **Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

## SHORT TAKES

### > Inflation

- o It refers to the rate at which the general price level for goods and services increases over a period of time, causing a decrease in purchasing power of money or real income.
- o There are different methods for measuring inflation such as Consumer Price Index (CPI), Wholesale Price Index (WPI), GDP deflator, and more, with each focusing on a specific aspect of price changes.

### > Consumer Price Index (CPI):

- o CPI measures the **average change in prices of goods and services** consumed by households.

#### How it is calculated:

- A **basket of goods and services** (food, fuel, housing, etc.) is selected.
- Each item is given a **weight** based on its importance in spending.

- Current prices are compared with a **base year**.

#### Formula:

$$\text{CPI} = (\text{Cost of basket in current year} / \text{Cost in base year}) \times 100$$

If CPI = 120, prices have risen **20%** from the base year.

### > Wholesale Price Index (WPI):

- o While the CPI measures the price changes in the retail market (maximum retail prices {MRP}, inclusive of taxes), the WPI measures the price changes in the wholesale market. S
- o Example, the price of a commodity (such as onions) would vary depending on the fact that it is bought from the wholesale market or retail market.

### > GDP deflator:

- o Another measure of inflation relates to the rate at which the prices of all domestically produced

goods and services change.

- o The price index used in this case is the GDP deflator. The GDP deflator (also called implicit price deflator) is the ratio of the value of goods and services an economy produces in a particular year at current prices to that at prices prevailing during any other reference (base) year.
- o  $GDP\ Deflator = ((Nominal\ GDP/real\ GDP)) * 100.$

#### ➤ **Headline inflation**

- o It is the overall rate at which prices of all goods and services in the economy are rising, including food and fuel. In India, it is measured using the

Consumer Price Index (CPI) and reflects the total cost-of-living change faced by households. It is the most widely reported inflation figure and is used by the RBI for monetary policy decisions.

#### ➤ **Core inflation**

- o It is the rate of price increase **excluding food and fuel**, as these components are highly volatile and influenced by temporary supply shocks. It reflects the underlying, more stable trend in inflation driven by demand conditions in the economy. Policymakers use core inflation to assess persistent inflationary pressures while framing monetary policy.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CPI 2024 REVISION

### ➔ **Change in Base Year from 2012 to 2024**

- o 2024 is assigned an index value of 100.
- o Inflation is calculated as deviation from this new benchmark.
- o Reflects contemporary price structures and consumption behaviour.

### ➔ **Reconstitution of Consumption Basket**

- o The new CPI series significantly expands coverage.
  - Number of items:
    - » Increased from 299 to 358
    - » Goods: 259 to 308
    - » Services: 40 to 50
  - Market coverage expanded:
    - » Rural markets: 1,181 to 1,465
    - » Urban markets: 1,114 to 1,395
    - » 12 online marketplaces added (new inclusion)
- o New items included (e.g., modern consumer electronics such as airpods).
- o Obsolete items removed (e.g., audio cassettes).
- o Basket based on **Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2023–24.**, replacing outdated 2011–12 data.
- o This improves representational accuracy of household spending.

### ➔ **Change in Food Weight – Engel’s Law in Action**

- o Food weight was reduced from **45.86% to 36.75%**.
  - Headline inflation may become less volatile because food prices are typically more

unstable.

- o Reflects rising incomes and diversification of expenditure.
- o This aligns with **Engel’s Law**, proposed by German economist **Ernst Engel**, which states that as income rises, the proportion spent on food declines.
- o This structural shift indicates, expanding service economy, rising discretionary spending, growing urbanisation and middle-class consumption

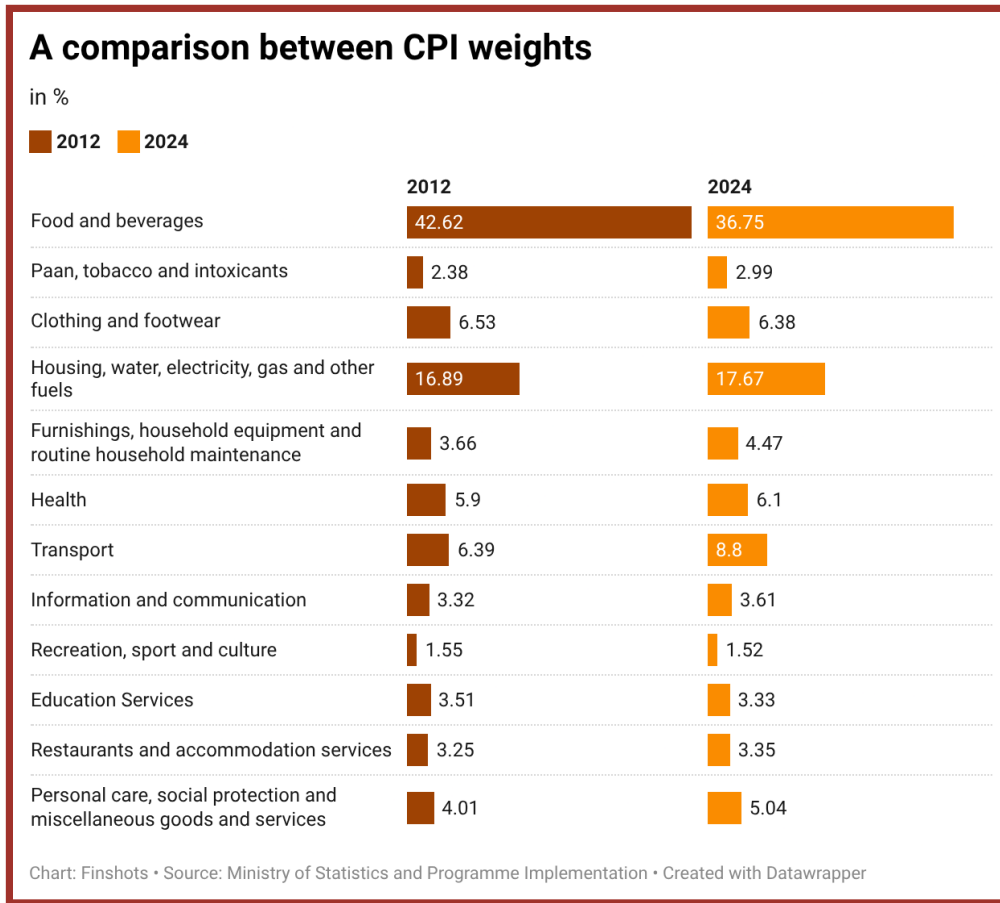
### ➔ **Inclusion of Rural House Rent**

- o Rural house rent added for the first time.
- o Improves measurement of rural housing consumption.
- o Reduces urban bias in housing inflation.
- o This enhances coverage and inclusiveness.

### ➔ **Adoption of COICOP 2018 Classification**

- o The new series adopts the **United Nations’ Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP 2018)**.
  - Structure: 12 Divisions, 43 Groups, 92 Classes, 162 Subclasses, 358 Items
  - New or expanded groups include:
    - » Furnishings and household maintenance
    - » Health
    - » Transport
    - » Information and communication
    - » Recreation and culture
    - » Education services
    - » Restaurants and accommodation
    - » Personal care and social protection

- o Benefits: International comparability, usage-based classification, more granular data dissemination, improved analytical clarity



## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CPI REVISION

### ☀ Improved Accuracy in Inflation Measurement

- o Updated weights ensure inflation reflects real household budgets.
- o Reduces distortions caused by outdated consumption patterns.

### ☀ Better Monetary Policy Calibration

- o CPI is the nominal anchor for inflation targeting. More accurate inflation signals help the Reserve Bank of India set appropriate interest rates.
- o A poorly measured CPI can result in excessive tightening, delayed response to inflation, and policy misalignment.

### ☀ Enhanced Fiscal Targeting

- o Accurate inflation measurement enables better

subsidy calibration, improved social welfare targeting, and realistic assessment of purchasing power

### ☀ Reduced Volatility in Headline Inflation

- o Lower weight for food (a volatile category) may reduce short-term spikes in headline inflation, leading to more stable policy signals.

### ☀ Global Comparability

- o Alignment with international standards enhances investor confidence, cross-country inflation comparison, and statistical credibility

### ☀ Strengthening Institutional Credibility

- o Transparent methodology, expert consultation, and linking factors maintain continuity and trust in official statistics.

## CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

### ⚠ Comparability Issues

- o Direct comparison with old series becomes difficult. Although linking factors are provided, interpretation may be complex for researchers and policymakers.

### ⚠ Reduced Food Weight and Perception Gap

- o Lower food weight may reduce headline volatility.
- o However, food inflation disproportionately affects poorer households.

- o Headline inflation may appear moderate even if food prices rise sharply.
- o This could create a perception mismatch between official inflation and live inflation.
- o Online prices may differ from offline market prices.
- o Digital inclusion varies across regions, potentially affecting representativeness.

🔗 **Urban-Rural Divergence**

- o Although coverage has improved, consumption patterns vary widely across regions. Capturing heterogeneity remains a challenge.

### WAY FORWARD

✦ **Provide Official Back-Series Data**

- o MoSPI should release a fully recalculated historical CPI series under the new methodology instead of relying only on linking factors. This will ensure smooth comparability, reduce analytical confusion, and strengthen policy credibility.

🔗 **Develop Distribution-Sensitive Inflation Measures**

- o Alongside headline CPI, publish income-group-wise and region-wise inflation data. This will address the perception gap, especially since food inflation disproportionately affects poorer households.

✦ **Ensure Balanced Digital and Physical Price Capture**

- o Regular calibration between online and offline prices is necessary to avoid digital bias. Strong rural and semi-urban field surveys must continue to ensure representativeness.

✦ **Institutionalise Regular Base Year Revisions**

- o Adopt a fixed 5-year revision cycle for CPI.
- o Periodic updates will prevent methodological lag and ensure inflation measurement keeps pace with structural economic changes.

## CONCLUSION

The revision of the CPI to base year 2024 is more than a statistical exercise, it is a reflection of India's economic transition. By updating the consumption basket, reducing the weight of food, incorporating rural housing, and adopting global classification standards, India has modernised its primary inflation indicator. Accurate inflation measurement is the compass of monetary policy and welfare governance. As India advances toward becoming a developed economy, credible and contemporary statistics form the invisible infrastructure that supports macroeconomic stability and policy precision.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** The recent revision of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) base year from 2012 to 2024 reflects structural changes in the Indian economy. Discuss the rationale behind this revision and examine its significance for monetary policy and economic governance.

**(10 marks) (150 words)**

# ALL INDIA LABOUR STRIKE

*Syllabus: GS II - Government policies and interventions*

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q)** How do pressure groups influence Indian political process? Do you agree with this view that informal pressure groups have emerged as powerful as formal pressure groups in recent years? (2017)

**Q)** Pressure group politics is sometimes seen as the informal face of politics. With regards to the above, assess the structure and functioning of pressure groups in India. (2013)

## WHY IN NEWS

On **February 12**, workers and farmers across India participated in a nationwide strike, organised by several trade unions and parties to protest against the various Central government policies.

## INTRODUCTION

**Labour strikes are a significant instrument of collective bargaining** in industrial relations, reflecting tensions between workers' rights and economic governance. In India, their legitimacy, regulation, and impact must be understood within a constitutional framework and contemporary socio-economic realities.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF STRIKE

### ➔ No Fundamental Right to Strike:

- o The Indian Constitution does *not* expressly recognise the right to strike as a fundamental right.
- o The Supreme Court held in *Kameshwar Prasad v. State of Bihar* that striking is not covered under Article 19 as a fundamental right.

### ➔ Freedom of Association:

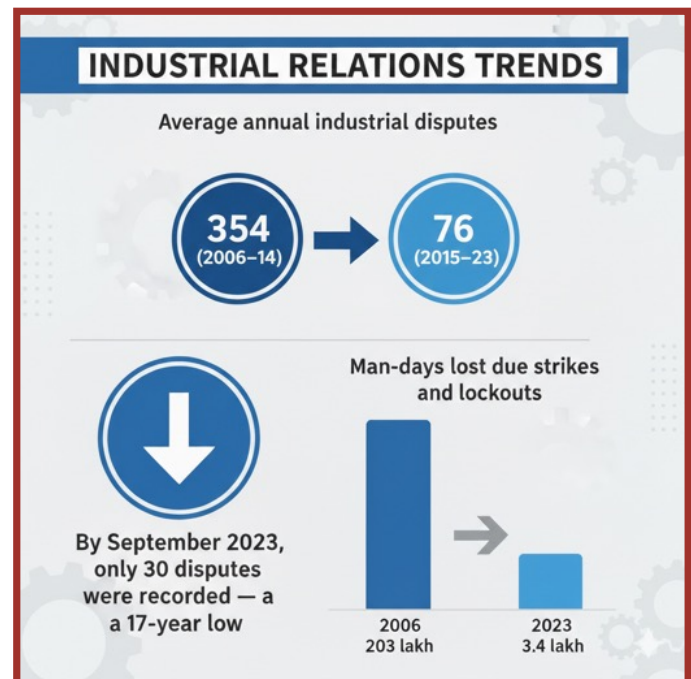
- o Workers can form trade unions under **Article 19(1)(c)**, which protects freedom of association.
- o However, this does *not* automatically include the right to strike.

### ➔ Statutory Recognition under Industrial Laws:

- o The **Industrial Disputes Act, 1947** (and later the Industrial Relations Code, 2020) recognises strike as a *statutory right* with procedural safeguards (e.g., notice periods).
- o Under current law workers must give advance notice (often 14 days) before striking and comply with conciliation procedures.

### ➔ Restrictions for Public Utility & Essential Services:

Strikes in essential services (like railways, hospitals) face greater legal restrictions to prevent public disorder and safeguard public interest.



## ABOUT THE NEW LABOUR CODES

☞ **Consolidation of Laws:** The new labour codes consolidate **29 central labour laws** into **4 main codes**:

- o **Code on Wages, 2019**
- o **Industrial Relations Code, 2020**
- o **Social Security Code, 2020**

o **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020**

☞ **Wage Redefinition:** Basic pay and allowances must constitute **at least 50% of total remuneration**, boosting PF, pension, and gratuity contributions.

- ✦ **Gratuity for Fixed-Term Employees:** Fixed-term workers eligible for **gratuity after 1 year**, providing financial security for short-term employment.
- ✦ **Expanded Social Security:** Coverage extended to **gig, platform, and unorganised workers**, including insurance, PF, maternity, and welfare benefits.
- ✦ **Portability and Income Protection:** Benefits are **portable across states and jobs**; statutory minimum wages, timely payment, and limits on deductions ensured.
- ✦ **Macroeconomic Impact:** Higher worker income increases **consumption, savings, and formal financial participation**, supporting inclusive growth.

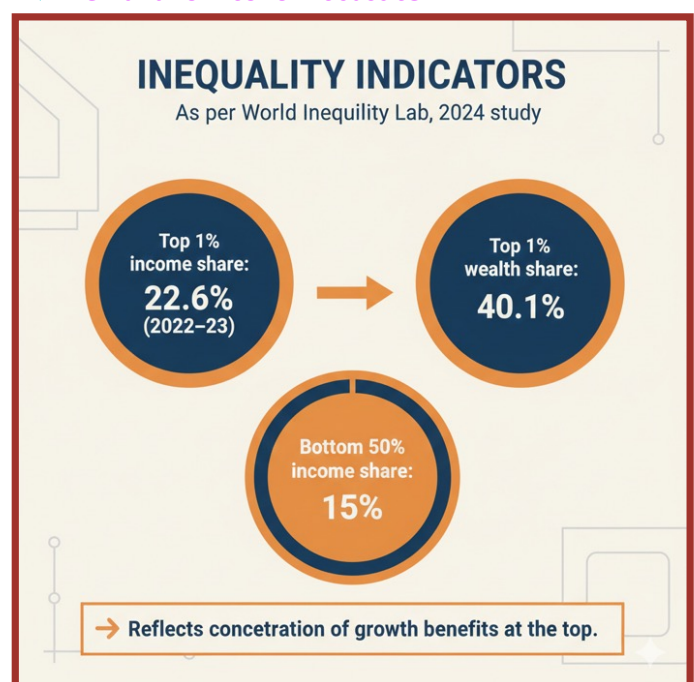
## DEMANDS OF THE RECENT STRIKE (FEB 12, 2026)



### Labour policy rollback

- o The trade unions described the labour codes as a “deceptive fraud” and a direct assault on workers’ rights.
- o They argue the codes **undermine trade union rights, restrict collective action** and deepen worker precarity by **legalising hire-and-fire practices** and weakening industrial relations safeguards.
- o Expansion of flexible employment seen as increasing **casualisation of labour**.
- o The code imposes **stricter conditions for legal strikes** like **60 days’ notice and prohibition during tribunal proceedings**, making spontaneous collective action difficult.
- o Union recognition rules (e.g., 51% membership for sole negotiating rights) could **marginalise smaller unions** and weaken collective bargaining.
- o Raising the **threshold for government approval for layoffs from 100 to 300 workers** is seen as weakening job security and favouring business interests
- o They argue that the codes were **notified without meaningful tripartite (government-employer-worker) consultations or robust parliamentary debate**.
- ➔ **Withdrawal of Bills and Acts:** Besides labour codes, protesters demanded

- o Withdrawal of Electricity Amendment Bill (fear of tariff hikes and reduced state role).
- o Withdrawal of Draft Seed Bill (concerns over corporate control of seeds and farmer autonomy).
- o Repeal Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act.
- ➔ **Employment and welfare guarantees**
  - o Restoration and strengthening of provisions under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
  - o Scrapping of the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025.
- ➔ **Trade and economic policy concerns**
  - o Opposition to the proposed **India-US interim trade deal**, described by opposition MPs as a “trap deal”.
  - o Protection for domestic farmers and small producers from cheaper imports under trade agreements with the US, EU, and New Zealand.
- ➔ **Demand for Economic Justice**



- o Workers demand more equitable distribution of wealth generated through labour and stronger protection of employment security.

### 🔍 **Opposition to Privatisation:**

- o Unions opposed privatisation of public sector units

and rising casualisation of labour.

### 🔍 **Support from Farmer Groups:**

- o Farmer organisations like the **Samyukta Kisan Morcha** joined the strike over issues like MSP, electricity tariffs, and broader trade policy concerns

## COUNTER ARGUMENTS

♣️ **Government & Political Criticism:** Some political leaders labelled the Bharat Bandh call as *politically motivated* rather than genuinely labour-centric, arguing that reforms aim to boost worker welfare and create business opportunities.

♣️ **Trade integration rationale:** Trade agreements positioned as instruments to expand export markets, modernise industry, and embed India in global supply chains.

♣️ **Economic Growth Argument:** Trade unions are alleged to discourage investment, industrial expansion, and hiring.

♣️ **Minimum Wage Critique:** Critics argue higher wage mandates may reduce employment opportunities.

♣️ **Industrial Closure Claim:** Some argue aggressive unionism contributes to closure of traditional industries.

♣️ **Reform Justification:** Labour codes are defended as necessary for “Ease of Doing Business” and industrial competitiveness.

♣️ **Differentiating Protests and Strikes:** Critics note that *bandhs* (nationwide shutdowns) often go beyond lawful strike actions restricted to workplaces, and can disrupt public life, infringing on others’ rights.

♣️ **Balanced Dialogue Preferred:** Some commentators suggest negotiation and social dialogue are more constructive than shutdowns that inconvenience the public and risk economic losses

## IMPACT OF THE STRIKE

☀️ **Service Disruptions:** Key public services, public sector banks, transport, postal and government offices saw disruptions in many states during the strike, while essential services like hospitals remained operational.

☀️ **Regional Variations:** In Kerala and parts of Maharashtra, industrial units and transport services faced partial or near-total shutdowns, while in other areas impact was limited by non-participation or

contractual labour filling gaps.

☀️ **Economic Activity:** Some reports indicate significant losses in sectors like banking operations (e.g., ₹1,800 crore cited in parts of Maharashtra).

☀️ **Social Impact:** Daily life disruptions, challenge to transport, closures of shops, schools and offices impacted citizens.

## WAY FORWARD

✳️ **Strengthening Social Dialogue:** Establishing regular **tripartite dialogues** among government, employers and workers’ unions to resolve labour issues rather than resorting to strikes.

✳️ **Evidence-based policy review:** Parliamentary committee scrutiny of Labour Codes and proposed economic legislation with published impact assessments on workers, MSMEs, and agriculture.

✳️ **Balanced reform pathway:** Phased implementation of labour reforms with expanded social security nets, grievance redress mechanisms, and state-level flexibility.

✳️ **Trade safeguards:** Sector-specific protection measures for vulnerable crops and industries before concluding major trade agreements.

✳️ **Legal Clarity & Worker Protection:** Clearer legal

definitions of strike procedures and protection for lawful peaceful protests could balance worker rights with public order.

✳️ **Employment and Social Security:** Addressing core demands like minimum wage legislation, social security expansion (MGNREGA/urban equivalents), and job generation.

✳️ **Public Awareness & Alternatives to Shutdowns:**

- o Promoting awareness on rights and facilitating less disruptive protest methods like assemblies, marches can protect civil liberties while voicing dissent.

- o Evidence from the International **Labour Organization** and **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** suggests strong unions support equitable growth.

## CONCLUSION

While strikes remain an important democratic tool for workers to voice grievances, prolonged disruptions can impose economic and social costs on the broader public. A balanced approach rooted in social dialogue, responsive labour policy, and protection of both worker welfare and public interest is essential for sustainable industrial harmony.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** “Collective bargaining is the foundation of industrial democracy.” Examine this statement in the context of labour strikes.

**(10 marks) (150 words)**

# INDIA MALAYSIA RELATIONS

Syllabus: GS II - International Relations

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q)** Do you think that BIMSTEC is a parallel organisation like the SAARC? What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the two? How are Indian foreign policy objectives realized by forming this new organisation? (2022)

**Q)** Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in South East Asian countries economy and society. Appraise the role of Indian Diaspora in South-East Asia in this context. (2017)

**Q)** Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post Cold War international scenario. (2016)

## WHY IN NEWS

At the invitation of Anwar Ibrahim, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Narendra Modi undertook an official visit to Malaysia from 7–8 February 2026 to strengthen bilateral ties.

## INTRODUCTION

Relations between India and Malaysia have evolved into a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership driven by **shared maritime geography, diaspora linkages and expanding economic ties**. The partnership reflects converging interests in Indo-Pacific stability, ASEAN engagement and mutually beneficial development.

## SHORT TAKES

### ➤ Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):

- A **regional inter-governmental organisation** established in **1967** to promote peace, stability, economic growth, and cooperation among Southeast Asian countries, and it now plays a central role in regional diplomacy and integration.

- As of 2025, ASEAN has **11 member states** namely **Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Timor-Leste**, working together on shared political, security, and economic priorities.

## ABOUT MALAYSIA

- ➔ **Location:** Malaysia is a country in Southeast Asia composed of two geographically separate regions namely **Peninsular Malaysia** and **East Malaysia on the island of Borneo**.
- ➔ **Capital:** Its national capital is **Kuala Lumpur**, while the **administrative centre is Putrajaya**.
- ➔ **Government:** Malaysia is a **federal constitutional monarchy** with a ceremonial head of state (the Yang di-Pertuan Agong) and an elected prime minister as head of government.
- ➔ **Population:** The estimated population in 2025 is about **33.36 million**.
- ➔ **Ethnic Diversity:** The population is ethnically diverse, including **Malays, Chinese, Indians, and indigenous groups**.
- ➔ **Official Language and Religions:** **Malay** is the official language; Islam is the official religion, alongside Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism.
- ➔ **History:** Malaysia was formed in **1963** when Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore

came together; Singapore later seceded in 1965.

- ➔ **Geography:** The country's terrain includes **mountain ranges, rainforests, and coastal plains**, with tropical climate prevalent throughout.
- ➔ **Economic Activities:** Malaysia's economy includes **agriculture (rice, rubber, palm oil), petroleum production, manufacturing, and electronics**.
- ➔ **Strategic Position:** Situated near the **Strait of Malacca**, Malaysia occupies a key location on major global maritime trade routes.



## HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF RELATIONS

### 🕒 Diplomatic beginnings & cultural links

- o India and Malaysia **established diplomatic relations in 1957**, building on longstanding civilizational and cultural connections, including **Sanskrit influence on the Malay language**.
- o **Tamil-origin Indians**, whose presence dates back centuries and expanded during **colonial-era migration to Malaya for plantation and infrastructure** work, remain a key bridge in bilateral ties.
- o Malaysia hosts around **2.9 million people of Indian origin**, among the largest Indian diaspora populations globally.
- o India has extended **Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) eligibility up to sixth-generation descendants**, reinforcing enduring cultural linkages.

### 🕒 Economic and institutional frameworks

- o The **Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** has served as the main economic framework to elevate trade and investment cooperation over decades.

### 🕒 Defence and security cooperation

- o Defence ties date back decades with an MoU on Defence Cooperation signed in **1993**; joint exercises like **Exercise Harimau Shakti** have been held regularly (5th edition in 2025).

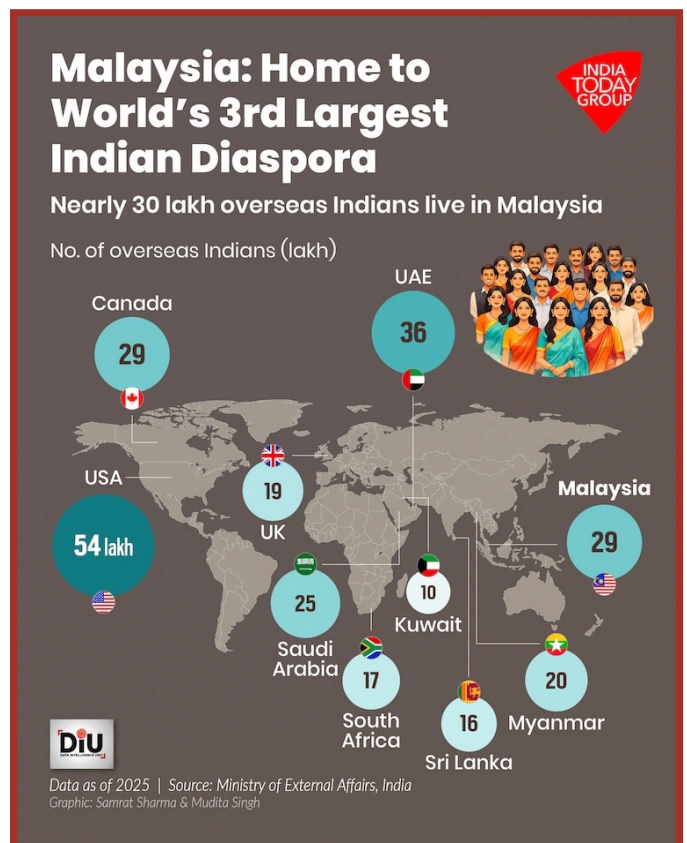
### 🕒 Multilateral engagement

- o Joint participation in joint training, ASEAN-India

channels, and strategic dialogues underscores shared regional outlooks.

### 🕒 Elevated partnership

- o In **2024**, bilateral ties were elevated to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, reflecting deeper cooperation across political, economic, defence, digital and cultural areas.



## OUTCOMES OF THE RECENT VISIT

### 🔄 Reaffirming strategic ties:

- o During PM Narendra Modi's official visit, India and Malaysia reaffirmed commitment to strengthen their **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** covering economy, defence, digital technologies, and regional cooperation.

### 🔄 Signing of agreements:

- o **11 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)** and bilateral documents were signed or exchanged across diverse sectors including semiconductors, disaster management, peacekeeping, digital cooperation, and education.

### 🔄 Trade and investment:

- o Both sides set the goal to **surpass the 2025 bilateral trade level of US\$18.6 billion**, with expanded focus on semiconductors, AI, fintech and renewable energy.

- o Agreement to expedite review of the **ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement** under ASEAN framework.

### 🔄 Economic cooperation mechanisms:

- o Participation in the **10th India-Malaysia CEO Forum** to enhance business partnerships.
- o Leaders encouraged **local-currency settlement for trade (INR-Ringgit)** to reduce reliance on third-party currencies and boost financial resilience.

### 🔄 Diplomatic and institutional developments

- o India announced the establishment of an **Indian Consulate General in Malaysia**.
- o Malaysia extended **support for India's permanent membership** in the United Nations Security Council.

### 🔄 People-to-people and cultural outcomes:

- o Agreements emphasised student exchanges, cultural Chairs (e.g., **Thiruvalluvar Chair of Indian Studies**), digital payments linkages (NPCI-PayNet) and tourism cooperation.
- o Modi's visit included interactions with Indian-origin ministers, MPs and industry leaders.

**Establishment of institutional mechanisms:**

- o Strategic Affairs Working Group (SAWG)
- o Expanded Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM) engagement
- o **Su-30 Forum** for cooperation between the Indian

**AREAS OF COOPERATION**

**Strategic-geopolitical cooperation**

- o Malaysia borders the **Strait of Malacca**, a critical maritime trade route connecting the Andaman Sea to the South China Sea.
- o Over **55% of India's trade passes through these waters**, making security cooperation essential.
- o Malaysia serves as a key gateway for India's engagement with ASEAN.
- o Shared interest in a multipolar regional order amid great power competition.

**Trade and economic growth**

- o Malaysia is **India's 16th largest trading partner overall** and **3rd largest in ASEAN**; India ranks among the **top 10 trading partners for Malaysia**.
- o Malaysia's key investments in India totalled about **US\$3.3 billion** with commitments of an additional **US\$5 billion** in renewable energy and infrastructure sectors.
- o Trade settlement in Indian Rupees (INR) has been permitted since April 2023.

**Cultural, education & people-to-people ties**

- o Malaysia allows **visa-free travel for Indian**

**AREAS OF FRICTION**

**Political-diplomatic tensions**

- o 2019 diplomatic crisis following Malaysian criticism of India's policy on Jammu & Kashmir at the UN.
- o India responded with economic pressure through reduced palm oil imports, affecting bilateral trade.

**Zakir Naik extradition issue**

- o Zakir Naik, an Indian Islamic preacher, has been residing in Malaysia since 2016 after leaving India

Air Force and Royal Malaysian Air Force

**Security and strategic outcomes**

- o Joint commitment to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation and expand intelligence sharing
- o Joint commitment to **peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific**.
- o Agreement to cooperate in countering radicalisation, terror financing, misuse of emerging technologies by terrorists
- o Cooperation to be strengthened at multilateral platforms including the Financial Action Task Force.

**nationals (since Dec 2023)** and India issues **gratis tourist visas for Malaysians (since July 2024)**.

- o Nearly **1.4 million Indian tourists visited Malaysia in 2025**.



where he faces charges of **money laundering and alleged promotion of extremism**.

- o Malaysia granted him **permanent residency** and maintains that any action must follow its **legal process and evidentiary standards**, making it a sensitive bilateral issue.

**Trade Growth Constraints**

- o Bilateral trade growth with Malaysia lags compared to overall ASEAN trade as it still represents only

~1.7% of India's exports/imports, leaving room for **economic recalibration**.

♣ **Strategic balancing challenges**

- o Malaysia balances relations with multiple major powers, requiring India to continuously strengthen

engagement to remain a key partner.

♣ **Maritime Security Participation**

- o India's bid to join the **Malacca Strait Patrol** has seen partial recognition but no definitive operational role, limiting full maritime cooperation.

### WAY FORWARD

- \* **Economic scaling:** Move beyond current ~\$20 billion trade through manufacturing integration and investment facilitation.
- \* **Deepen technological cooperation:** Strengthen semiconductor collaboration leveraging Malaysia's established ecosystem and India's growing semiconductor mission goals.
- \* **Green growth partnership:** Scale solar, hydrogen and clean energy investments for net-zero transition.
- \* **Institutionalise security cooperation:** Operationalise annual **India-Malaysia Security Dialogue**, cyber cooperation platforms, and joint focus groups to counter non-traditional maritime threats.
- \* **Deepen People-to-People and Diaspora Linkages:** Use diaspora networks, education exchanges and cultural engagement as stabilising pillars of long-term bilateral relations.
- \* **Promote regional & global leadership:** Continue synergised engagement within ASEAN, Indo-Pacific dialogues, G20/BRICS frameworks and multilateral forums including UN reform discussions.

## CONCLUSION

Despite occasional political sensitivities, both countries are increasingly prioritising pragmatic cooperation in trade, technology and security. Sustained implementation of agreements and deeper economic interdependence will be key to realising the full potential of the bilateral partnership.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** "India–Malaysia partnership reflects continuity of civilizational ties and convergence of strategic interests." Critically examine.

**(15 marks) (250 words)**

## WEEKLY DOSSIERS

### KERALA DECLARES TIDAL FLOODING AS A STATE-SPECIFIC DISASTER

Kerala has declared tidal flooding as a State-specific disaster under the Disaster Management Act, enabling financial assistance under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). The move recognises recurring seawater intrusion along Kerala's coastline as a serious hazard affecting lives and livelihoods.

#### Context

- ◆ Tidal flooding refers to seawater inundation of low-lying coastal areas when sea levels temporarily rise above normal thresholds. Unlike cyclone-induced storm surges, tidal flooding:
  - Occurs twice daily
  - Intensifies during full and new moons (spring tides)
  - Can worsen when combined with coastal storms
- ◆ In Kerala, frequent seawater ingress affects coastal areas such as Vypin, Chellanam, Edakochi, Perumbadappu, and Kumbalangi in Kochi, along with other districts across the State's 590-km coastline.
- ◆ Under Section 2(d) of the Disaster Management Act, a disaster includes natural phenomena that cause loss of life, livelihood, and living conditions. Kerala has invoked this provision to classify tidal flooding as a disaster when it exceeds the High Tide Line (HTL) and causes damage.

#### Key Issues

- ◆ **Geographic and Climatic Vulnerability**
  - Kerala's low-lying coastal plains, below-sea-level regions (like Kuttanad), and dense backwater systems make it highly susceptible to sea-level rise and tidal ingress. Climate change further intensifies the frequency and severity of such flooding.
- ◆ **Socio-Economic Impact on Coastal Communities**
  - Frequent tidal flooding damages homes, fishing infrastructure, agricultural lands, and small

businesses. Around 10% of the State's population is affected, particularly fishermen and coastal farmers, leading to recurring livelihood insecurity.

#### ◆ Land Use and Ecological Degradation

- Encroachments in floodplains, reduced river depth due to siltation, and loss of natural buffers such as mangroves aggravate seawater intrusion. Inadequate drainage infrastructure further worsens the impact.

#### Way Forward

- ◆ **Strengthen Coastal Regulation and Scientific Planning**
  - Strict enforcement of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms, scientific mapping of High Tide Lines, and integration of sea-level rise projections into urban planning are essential.
- ◆ **Promote Nature-Based and Climate-Resilient Solutions**
  - Restoration of mangroves, desiltation of rivers, protection of wetlands, and development of flood-resilient infrastructure can reduce long-term vulnerability.
- ◆ **Institutionalise Long-Term Adaptation and Early Warning Systems**
  - Establish real-time tidal monitoring, community-based preparedness programmes, and phased relocation plans in extremely high-risk zones to ensure sustainable coastal resilience.

#### Conclusion

Kerala's recognition of tidal flooding as a State-specific disaster reflects evolving climate realities and adaptive governance. However, financial relief must be complemented by long-term coastal resilience strategies to sustainably manage increasing sea-level threats.

### FROM TARIFF DISADVANTAGE TO STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY: INDIA'S TEXTILE MOMENT

India's textile exports to the European Union have declined in market share over the past decade, while Bangladesh has emerged as a dominant supplier of readymade garments. However, Bangladesh's impending graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status and India's recent Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU may alter competitive dynamics.

## Background

Bangladesh benefited from duty-free access under the EU's Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme, enabling zero-tariff garment exports even with imported fabric. India, in contrast, faced Most Favoured Nation (MFN) tariffs of around 12%, reducing price competitiveness.

Bangladesh's strategy focused on large-scale, low-cost garment manufacturing, while India's exports remained concentrated in yarns and fabrics rather than finished apparel.

## Emerging Opportunities for India

- ◆ **Tariff Parity:** With Bangladesh losing EBA benefits by 2029 and India securing improved access under the FTA, the tariff gap may narrow.
- ◆ **Vertical Integration Advantage:** India's relatively integrated textile value chain (cotton to garment) helps meet stricter rules of origin.
- ◆ **Employment Potential:** Revitalising garment exports can boost labour-intensive manufacturing and address employment concerns.

## Key Challenges

- ◆ **Higher Production Costs:** Logistics inefficiencies, power costs, and compliance burdens raise unit prices.
- ◆ **Scale and Speed Constraints:** Bangladesh has built strong global buyer networks and production clusters.
- ◆ **Policy Fragmentation:** Lack of sustained, garment-focused industrial strategy compared to Bangladesh's targeted push.

## Way Forward

- ◆ India must enhance cost competitiveness through logistics reforms, strengthen textile clusters, promote scale-based incentives, and align trade policy with industrial strategy.
- ◆ Skill development and ESG compliance will also be critical for EU market penetration.

## Conclusion

India can potentially overtake Bangladesh in EU textile exports, but tariff advantages alone are insufficient. Sustained structural reforms, cost efficiency, and coherent industrial policy will determine whether this window of opportunity translates into durable export gains.

## BRIDGING THE GENDERED UPSKILLING GAP IN INDIA'S AI TRANSITION

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping labour markets globally. In India, while concerns revolve around job displacement and longer work hours, working women face a deeper structural constraint, time poverty arising from unpaid care work. Without addressing this imbalance, the AI transition risks widening gender inequality.

## Background

India's 2024 Time Use Survey reveals that women spend significantly more time than men on unpaid domestic and caregiving work. Women work nearly 9.6 hours daily in combined paid and unpaid labour, compared to 8.6 hours for men. During prime working years (25–39), women's total work hours exceed 70 per week.

Despite rising female labour force participation (around 40%), much of women's contribution remains unpaid or low-paid. Women spend nearly 10 hours less per week on self-development activities than men, a critical disadvantage in an AI-driven economy where continuous upskilling is essential.

## Key Concerns

- ◆ **Time Poverty and Double Burden:** Women's unpaid responsibilities remain unchanged even as paid work increases, limiting time for skill development.
- ◆ **Automation Risk:** Women are overrepresented in low-skilled, automation-prone jobs, making them more vulnerable to AI disruption.
- ◆ **Invisible Economic Contribution:** Women contribute only 17% to GDP, largely because unpaid work remains outside national income calculations.

## Significance

- ◆ AI-driven growth demands reskilling and lifelong learning. However, unequal domestic arrangements restrict women's ability to participate in skill enhancement. Without targeted interventions, India's demographic dividend and inclusive growth goals may be undermined.

## Way Forward

- ◆ **Time-Saving Infrastructure:** Investment in childcare, eldercare, piped water, clean energy, and safe transport through gender-responsive budgeting.

- ◆ **Flexible and Localised Upskilling:** Expansion of digital and vocational programmes aligned with women’s mobility and time constraints, including initiatives under the India AI Mission.
- ◆ **Outcome-Based Policy Design:** Incorporating time-use data into labour and economic planning to reduce unpaid work burdens.

## Conclusion

India’s AI transition must not exacerbate existing gender disparities. True empowerment requires not merely adding paid employment but redistributing unpaid work and freeing women’s time for productive and skill-enhancing opportunities. Unless women’s time is recognised as a critical economic resource, inclusive growth under the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 will remain incomplete.

## BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

### Right to be Found: Reconciling Digital Reputation with Press Freedom

- ◆ Following the recognition of privacy as a fundamental right in *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India*, Indian courts have acknowledged the Right to be Forgotten, allowing individuals to seek removal of outdated or harmful online content.
- ◆ However, mere erasure often conflicts with the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and press under **Article 19(1)(a)**, especially when original reporting was factually accurate.
- ◆ The emerging idea of the “**Right to be Found**” offers a balanced alternative rather than deleting past records, it seeks contextualisation by ensuring that acquittals, quashing orders, or subsequent developments are equally visible online.
- ◆ This approach preserves historical truth, corrects algorithmic bias, and upholds both individual dignity under Article 21 and the public’s right to information. In a digital ecosystem where reputational harm arises from selective visibility rather than falsity, informational justice may lie not in silencing the past, but in completing the narrative.

### Cooperation With Investigation and the Right Against Self-Incrimination

- ◆ In *Vinay Kumar Gupta v. State of Madhya Pradesh*, the Supreme Court of India granted anticipatory bail in an NDPS case despite the accused refusing to surrender his mobile phone. The Court held that cooperation with investigation cannot compel an accused to incriminate himself, reaffirming the constitutional protection under **Article 20(3)** against self-incrimination.
- ◆ While the State is entitled to conduct investigation under due process, it cannot equate non-surrender of potentially incriminating material with non-cooperation. The ruling strengthens the principle that investigative efficiency must operate within constitutional safeguards, ensuring that individual liberty and due process are not subordinated to prosecutorial convenience.

### Temple Festivals and the Constitutional Mandate to Annihilate Caste

- ◆ In *N Samaran v. The Commissioner and Others*, the Madras High Court held that temple festivals conducted by the State through the HR & CE Department cannot perpetuate caste identities.
- ◆ Emphasising **Article 14** and the republican promise of equality, the Court observed that public authorities must strive to annihilate caste rather than reinforce it through practices such as printing caste suffixes in official invitations.
- ◆ While declining to micromanage temple processions, the Court directed that henceforth caste names should not be used in festival communications. The ruling reinforces that when religious events involve State machinery, constitutional morality and equality must prevail over social custom.

## Reimagining Indian Federalism: Key Recommendations of the Kurian Joseph Committee

- ◆ The High-Level Committee on **Union–State Relations headed by Kurian Joseph** has proposed sweeping reforms to address what it terms “**creeping centralisation**” in India’s constitutional framework. Invoking the federalism principle recognised as part of the Basic Structure in ***S.R. Bommai v. Union of India***, the Committee recommends time-bound assent by Governors to State Bills, curbs on discretionary powers, and restructuring of the Governor’s appointment and removal process. It calls for abandoning the “**One Nation, One Language**” approach by strengthening multilingual constitutional guarantees and permanently entrenching English as a link language.
- ◆ The report further proposes stricter State ratification requirements for constitutional amendments under **Article 368**, consent-based territorial reorganisation under **Article 3**, and freezing inter-State delimitation till 2126 to protect demographic balance. It suggests separating Union and State Election Commissions, rejecting simultaneous elections, restoring education fully to the State List, and reforming the GST framework in light of ***Union of India v. Mohit Minerals Pvt. Ltd.***, which held GST Council recommendations to be advisory.
- ◆ Collectively, the recommendations seek to recalibrate India’s quasi-federal structure toward cooperative and constitutionally entrenched federalism, emphasising autonomy, linguistic pluralism, fiscal balance, and institutional accountability.

## Supreme Court on ‘Freebies’ and Fiscal Responsibility

- ◆ While hearing ***Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited v. Union of India***, a Bench led by Surya Kant expressed concern over the growing trend of cash transfers and blanket subsidies announced close to elections.
- ◆ The Court observed that indiscriminate distribution of State largesse, without distinguishing between the genuinely needy and those who can afford to pay, risks undermining fiscal discipline and long-term nation-building. Emphasising that welfare must be targeted, not reduced to political appeasement, the Court questioned whether such policies divert resources from infrastructure, health, education, and employment generation. The remarks reflect judicial concern over balancing welfare obligations with economic sustainability and responsible governance.

## ETHICS - CASE STUDY

**Q)** You are the District Magistrate of a backward district where a new AI-based beneficiary identification system has been introduced to streamline welfare delivery. The system uses digital records, income databases, and biometric authentication to identify eligible households under a nutrition and livelihood scheme. Within three months of implementation, several complaints emerge. Grassroots workers report that many widows, elderly persons, and migrant women workers have been excluded because of incomplete digital records, biometric mismatches, or absence of updated income data. Civil society groups argue that the system disproportionately disadvantages women who perform unpaid care work and lack formal documentation.

At the same time, the State Government is under pressure to showcase the district as a “model AI-enabled governance unit.” Senior officials informally advise you to avoid “negative reporting” and focus on improving system compliance rather than questioning the design.

You personally believe that technological reform is necessary to reduce leakages and corruption. However, you are concerned that strict reliance on automated systems may violate principles of equity and substantive justice.

In this context:

- a. What are the ethical issues involved in this case?
- b. Identify the stakeholders and their interests.
- c. As District Magistrate, what options are available to you? What course of action would you adopt and why?
- d. How can principles of social justice and constitutional morality guide your decision?

## ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- 1. Human Rights Ethics:** The Taliban’s new criminal code allows husbands to beat wives and children as long as it does not cause broken bones or open wounds and restricts women’s movement without a husband’s permission. Penalties vary by social class as religious scholars face advice only, elites get summons, middle class imprisonment, and lower class imprisonment plus corporal punishment.
- 2. Lack of Empathy:** Shaikh Shavali, a kova bun vendor from Andhra Pradesh, was harassed by YouTubers who accused him of selling adulterated kova and performing “food jihad,” demanded his Aadhaar and food certificate, and forced him to eat his own buns on camera for “likes and subscribers,” despite him holding a valid Food Safety certificate.
- 3. Resilience:** Displaced 18-year-old Palestinian amateur boxer Farah Abu Al-Qumsan is leading boxing training sessions for youths amid tents in Gaza City, providing psychological relief and a sense of normalcy for young people in the makeshift camps.
- 4. Communal Harmony:** In Kumaranalloor near Kottayam, the Mecca Masjid allowed 62-year-old Hindu woman Omana Rajendran’s body to be placed in its madrasa hall for final rites, with Hindu mantras chanted and necessary facilities provided by the mosque committee. The gesture was prompted by limited access to her home.
- 5. Justice:** The Supreme Court allowed the medical termination of a 30-week-old pregnancy of a minor, emphasizing that no person can be compelled to carry a pregnancy to term and highlighting the minor’s right to reproductive autonomy. The Bench noted that denying legal abortion beyond the 24-week limit could force women to seek unsafe procedures.
- 6. Social Responsibility:** In Uttar Pradesh’s Azamgarh, the 89-km Tamsa River clean-up under the Namami Gange Programme involved 111 gram panchayats and local volunteers who desilted shallow stretches, removed waste, cleared encroachments, and planted trees.
- 7. Determination:** Mayabhai Bhammar, a polio survivor from Bhavnagar, overcame early disability with support from the Blind People’s Association to become a national-level para powerlifter. In January 2026, he won silver at the 23rd Senior National Para Powerlifting Championship in the 49 kg category, lifting 115 kg, while also working as Zomato’s first disabled delivery partner in Ahmedabad.

## MODEL ESSAY

***"The roots of all goodness lie in the soil of appreciation for goodness"***

### Introduction

- Quote by Dalai Lama
- Goodness refers to virtues like honesty, compassion, empathy, kindness, and moral integrity.
- Appreciation—acknowledging and valuing positive deeds—acts as the soil where goodness grows.

### Importance of Appreciation

- **Encourages Positive Behavior:** Recognition motivates individuals to continue ethical acts. *Eg:* Malala Yousafzai gained global support for girls' education.
- **Fosters Moral Growth:** Seeing goodness in others inspires self-reflection and ethical action. *Eg:* Nelson Mandela credited ordinary citizens' courage against apartheid.
- **Counters Negativity:** Recognition highlights role models and reduces cynicism. *Eg:* "Fishermen Army" was publicly hailed as the "Superheroes of Kerala during the **2018 Kerala Floods**
- **Generates Ripple Effect:** Appreciated acts inspire others. *Eg:* Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement gained momentum through societal support.

### Challenges

- **Lack of Recognition:** Everyday good deeds often go unnoticed. *Eg:* **Anganwadi workers** in India perform critical healthcare and nutrition roles but lack appreciation
- **Materialism and Cynicism:** Focus on wealth overshadows moral acts. *Example:* Corruption scandals get more attention than integrity.
- **Social Biases:** Appreciation may be limited by caste, gender, or class. *Example:* Women and marginalized activists often face delayed recognition.

- **Short-lived Recognition:** Awards are occasional, limiting sustained impact. *Example:* Annual "Citizen of the Year" awards do not reinforce continuous moral behavior.

### Way Forward

- **Promote Daily Recognition:** Express gratitude at home, school, and workplace.
- **Institutional Recognition:** Public awards motivate ethical behavior. *Eg:* **Goldman Environmental Prize** recognizes grassroots environmental heroes, Nobel Peace Prize.
- **Media and Literature:** Highlight inspiring stories to encourage emulation. *Eg:* Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Captain Vikram Batra, The "Better India" or "Humans of New York" Model
- **Community Initiatives:** Recognize volunteers and social workers. *Eg:* Japan's Fureai Kippu system lets citizens earn credits for helping the elderly, usable for their own care later
- **Moral Education:** Teach appreciation of goodness in schools. *Eg:* Rewarding honesty, teamwork, and social service fosters lifelong values.

### Conclusion

- Appreciation nurtures goodness, motivates virtuous actions, and builds ethical societies.
- Without recognition, goodness may remain hidden or unreplicated; with it, acts of integrity, kindness, and courage multiply across society.

### Sample Quotes

- *Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured - Mark Twain*
- *Defeat may serve as well as victory to shake the soul and let the glory out- Edwin Markham*
- *Wisdom is oftentimes nearer when we stoop than when we soar- William Wordsworth*

## MAINS JOT DOWN



### GS I: IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES IN NEWS

- The Home Minister paid tribute to **Ramakrishna Paramahansa** on his birth anniversary, remembering his enduring message of spiritual unity and devotion.
- Born as **Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya** in Hooghly in the Bengal Presidency, he had limited formal education but emerged as one of India's most influential mystics. As a priest at the Dakshineswar Kali Temple near Kolkata, he experienced profound mystical visions and deep devotion to Goddess Kali.
- Ramakrishna practised diverse spiritual paths, including Vaishnavism, Shakta Tantrism, Advaita Vedanta, Sufism and Christianity and concluded that all religions ultimately lead to the same supreme reality (Brahman).
- His teachings of religious harmony, bhakti (devotion), and service to humanity profoundly influenced his chief disciple, **Swami Vivekananda**, who later founded the **Ramakrishna Mission** and Ramakrishna Math to carry forward his legacy.



### GS III: ENERGY

- India has added over **50,000 MW** of power generation capacity in FY 2025–26, surpassing the previous record of **34,054 MW** achieved in FY 2024–25.
- The country's total installed capacity now stands at approximately **520,000 MW**, reflecting rapid expansion in the energy sector. Of this, about **248,500 MW** comes from fossil fuel-based sources, while nearly **272,000 MW** is from non-fossil fuel sources, including around **263,200 MW** from renewable energy and **8,800 MW** from nuclear power.



### GS III: INFRASTRUCTURE

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has approved India's first **underwater twin tube road-cum-rail tunnel** under the **River Brahmaputra** in Assam.
- Spanning 33.7 km, including a 15.79 km tunnel, it will connect Gohpur (NH-15) and Numaligarh (NH-715). The project will be executed under the **EPC mode** and aims to enhance strategic and regional connectivity in the Northeast.



### GS III: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- At the India AI Impact Summit, the Prime Minister proposed the **M.A.N.A.V. Framework** to guide ethical and inclusive AI development across sectors like education and healthcare.
- **M – Moral & Ethical Systems:** Ensure fairness, transparency, and human oversight (aligned with NEP 2020's AI literacy focus).
- **A – Accountable Governance:** Establish clear rules and institutional responsibility under initiatives like the IndiaAI Mission.
- **N – National Sovereignty:** Strengthen domestic datasets, compute capacity, and semiconductor self-reliance.
- **A – Accessible & Inclusive AI:** Democratise AI through Digital Public Infrastructure such as MeghRaj Cloud.
- **V – Valid & Legitimate Systems:** Promote trust, safety, and legal safeguards against risks like deepfakes.
- The framework underscores AI as a tool for responsible, sovereign, and inclusive development.



**GS III: BIODIVERSITY**

- The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** has announced the development of India's first 'BeeCorridors' along National Highways.
- These corridors will consist of continuous stretches of **bee-friendly flowering trees and plants**, ensuring year-round availability of nectar and pollen. The initiative aims to mitigate the growing ecological stress on honeybees and other pollinators, thereby supporting biodiversity, pollination services, and overall ecosystem stability.



**GS III: ENVIRONMENT**

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**GS III: DEFENCE**

- **Exercise MILAN** is being held in Visakhapatnam, with participation from more than 70 nations in its 2026 edition.
- It is a **biennial multilateral naval exercise** hosted by the Indian Navy to enhance **maritime cooperation, interoperability, and partnership** among friendly navies.
- Launched in 1995 at Port Blair with just four participating navies, MILAN has grown into a premier global naval exercise reflecting India's expanding maritime engagement.



**GS III: INDIAN ECONOMY**

- The Union Government has launched a pilot to integrate **Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)** into the **Public Distribution System (PDS)** to enhance transparency, efficiency, and beneficiary empowerment in food security delivery.
- Under the initiative, a **programmable Digital Rupee (e₹)** is credited directly to beneficiaries' digital wallets and can be used exclusively to purchase entitled foodgrains at Fair Price Shops via QR or coupon codes.
- The system enables **real-time, secure, and traceable transactions**, removes the need for repeated biometric authentication, reduces leakages, and strengthens last-mile service delivery.



**GS III: AGRICULTURE**

- The **Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** has launched the first phase of the AI-based **Bharat VISTAAR** scheme in Rajasthan.
- VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources) aims to leverage India's AI-powered digital public infrastructure to support farmers' agricultural needs.
- It offers a **multilingual conversational advisory platform** that integrates data from AgriStack, ICAR, government schemes, IMD forecasts, mandi prices, and state systems into a unified interface. Farmers, including those using feature phones, can access real-time guidance and market information through simple phone-based queries.

## CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

### DIRECT LOAN GUARANTEES (DLGS)

- DLGs are contractual arrangements where a third party guarantees compensation to a **Regulated Entity (RE)** against borrower default. The total DLG cover on any loan portfolio is capped at **5% of the outstanding amount**, as specified upfront.

### NET NEUTRALITY

- Net Neutrality is the principle that **Telecom Service Providers (TSPs)** must treat all internet content equally. It ensures equal access, uniform speed, and non-discriminatory pricing for all websites and applications.

### SNOWBALL EARTH

- Snowball Earth refers to extreme global glaciation during the **Cryogenian Period (720–635 million years ago)**, when ice likely covered even tropical regions. Strengthened by the **albedo effect**, it significantly influenced Earth's climate system and the evolution of early life.

### SUPER-EARTHS

- Super-Earths are exoplanets larger than Earth but smaller than ice giants like Neptune. They can have up to **10 times Earth's mass**, may be rocky or gaseous, and are crucial for understanding planetary formation and evolution.

### MUNICIPAL BONDS

- Municipal Bonds are marketable debt instruments issued by **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** to finance infrastructure and capital projects. First issued in India by Bengaluru in 1997, they are regulated under SEBI's 2015 regulations, with 26 issuances raising about **₹3,783.90 crore** as of September 2025.