



FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> INDIA'S EXPORT OVERVIEW

> YOJANA JULY 2026

> DISABLED-FRIENDLY INDIA

10th AUGUST, 2026 - 16th AUGUST, 2026

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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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MANJIMA P
AIR 235

FABI RASHEED
AIR 71

SWATHI S BABU
AIR 522

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AIR 561

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INDIA'S EXPORT OVERVIEW

Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy

PYQ Mapping

Q) How would the recent phenomena of protectionism and currency manipulations in world trade affect macroeconomic stability of India? (2018)

Why in the News?

India's merchandise exports rose nearly **20% year-on-year to \$44.2 billion in July 2026**, largely driven by petroleum

products, electronics and engineering goods.

Introduction

India's merchandise exports have shown resilience despite geopolitical tensions, tariff uncertainties and weak global trade conditions. However, the recent surge also highlights the need to distinguish between **price-driven export growth and long-term structural competitiveness**.

Indicator	Recent Trend
Merchandise exports, July 2026	\$44.2 billion
Year-on-year growth	Nearly 20%
Merchandise trade deficit	Around \$32 billion
Additional exports over July 2025	\$7.26 billion
Petroleum contribution to increase	\$2.8 billion / 39%
Electronics contribution	\$2.16 billion / 30%
Engineering goods contribution	\$1.84 billion / 25%
Largest export destination	United States
Emerging markets	Tanzania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Kenya, Vietnam, Taiwan

Major Features of India's Export Basket

- ➔ **Petroleum products remain the biggest driver of export growth:**
 - o With exports rising by **42.6% from \$21 billion to \$30 billion during April–July 2026**, making overall export performance partly dependent on global oil prices.
- ➔ **Electronics are emerging as a structural strength:**
 - o With exports growing by **30.7% from \$16.2 billion to \$21.2 billion**, supported by India's expanding manufacturing and global supply-chain integration.
- ➔ **Engineering goods remain the backbone of manufactured exports:**
 - o Increasing by **18.2% to \$46.4 billion during April–July 2026**, reflecting growing industrial and value-addition capacity.
- ➔ **Pharmaceuticals remain an important export sector:**
 - o Providing India with a competitive advantage in generic medicines and potential growth in biosimilars, vaccines and complex medicines.
- ➔ **Traditional and agricultural exports are strengthening inclusive export growth:**

- o With **marine products growing by nearly 18%, meat/dairy/poultry by 41%, and handicrafts by 16%.**

Geographical Pattern of Indian Exports

- ♣ **The United States remains India's largest export market:**
 - o Accounting for around **one-fifth of India's merchandise exports during April–July 2026–27**, creating both export opportunities and dependence on the U.S. market.
- ♣ **India is gradually diversifying its export destinations:**
 - o With **Singapore's share rising from 2.7% in 2024–25 to 4.7% in April–July 2026–27.**
- ♣ **Exports to emerging markets are growing rapidly:**
 - o Particularly to **South Africa, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Kenya**, with Tanzania's share nearly doubling from **1.1% to 2%.**
- ♣ **Geographical diversification remains partly petroleum-driven:**
 - o As refined petroleum products account for a major share of increased exports to several new markets.

♣ Vietnam and Taiwan show promising diversification:

- o With exports of about **\$2.6 billion and \$0.8 billion respectively**, without petroleum products being the primary driver.

Major Concerns in India's Export Growth

- ▼ **Export growth remains concentrated** in petroleum, electronics and engineering goods, highlighting the need for greater diversification across sectors.
- ▼ **The merchandise trade deficit widened** from nearly **\$28 billion in July 2025 to \$32 billion in July 2026**, as imports grew faster than exports.
- ▼ **Structural bottlenecks** such as high logistics costs, infrastructure gaps, complex standards and limited MSME participation constrain export competitiveness.
- ▼ **Geopolitical disruptions** such as wars, shipping disruptions, sanctions and energy-price volatility can adversely affect export performance.
- ▼ **Low domestic value addition remains a concern**, making it necessary to focus on greater **export sophistication, technology and value addition** rather than merely increasing export value.

Way Forward

- * **Shift towards diversified and high-value exports** rather than focusing only on increasing the overall value of exports.
- * **Strengthen integration with Global Value Chains** by improving logistics, customs efficiency, port connectivity and trade facilitation.
- * **Increase domestic value addition** by developing strong component and manufacturing ecosystems in sectors such as electronics and machinery.
- * **Diversify export markets** towards Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, ASEAN and other emerging economies.
- * **Support MSMEs and future-oriented sectors** through easier export credit, quality certification, digital platforms and promotion of sectors such as semiconductors, green technology and medical devices.

Conclusion

India's export growth shows **resilience amid global uncertainties**, but its sustainability depends on reducing dependence on petroleum products and strengthening **electronics, engineering and other high-value sectors**. The focus should shift from merely increasing export volumes to building a **diversified, technology-intensive and globally integrated export economy**.

Sample Question

Q) India's recent merchandise export growth reflects both structural transformation and commodity-price effects." Analyse the changing composition and geographical diversification of India's exports and suggest measures for ensuring sustainable export-led growth. **(15 marks)**

DISABLED-FRIENDLY INDIA

Syllabus: GS II - Social Justice

PYQ Mapping

Q) Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in the society? Discuss (2017)

Why in the News?

Disability rights groups have flagged that the proposed **Census 2027 disability categories may not individually capture all 21 disabilities recognised under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**, potentially affecting accurate enumeration and welfare planning.

Introduction

A disabled-friendly India means ensuring **equality, dignity, accessibility and full participation** of persons with disabilities in social, economic and political life. India has moved from a charity-based approach towards a **rights-based framework**, but major gaps remain in accessibility, data, employment, education and implementation.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

- ✦ **Rights-based approach** shifted disability policy from welfare and charity towards **equality, dignity and empowerment**.
- ✦ **Expanded recognition** increased the number of specified disabilities from **7 to 21**, covering conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, Parkinson's disease, specific learning disabilities and multiple disabilities.
- ✦ **Reservation provisions** provide **5% reservation in higher educational institutions and 4% in government employment** for persons with benchmark disabilities.
- ✦ **Protection against discrimination** guarantees **equality, dignity, reasonable accommodation and equal opportunities**.
- ✦ **The accessibility mandate** requires governments to improve accessibility in **buildings, transport, information, communication and digital services**.

Major Challenges in Building a Disabled-Friendly India

- ✦ **Inadequate disability data** makes targeted policymaking difficult.
 - **Example:** the **21 disabilities recognised under**

the **RPwD Act** may not be adequately captured through broad census categories.

- ✦ **Inaccessible infrastructure** restricts independent mobility.
 - **Example:** many **railway stations, public buildings and buses** still lack accessible toilets, ramps, tactile pathways and other universal-design features.
- ✦ **Educational barriers** limit inclusion.
 - **Example:** the **Samagra Shiksha** framework provides support for inclusive education, but shortages of special educators and assistive learning materials remain challenges.
- ✦ **Limited employment opportunities** persist despite legal safeguards.
 - **Example:** the **RPwD Act provides 4% reservation in government jobs**, but implementation and reasonable accommodation remain uneven.
- ✦ **Digital exclusion** can create new barriers.
 - **Example:** **inaccessible government websites and mobile applications** may not work effectively with screen readers used by persons with visual disabilities.
- ✦ **Social stigma** continues to affect participation.
 - **Example:** persons with **autism and intellectual disabilities** often face discrimination in education, employment and community life.
- ✦ **Weak implementation** reduces the impact of progressive laws.
 - **Example:** the **Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)** has improved accessibility, but gaps in monitoring and compliance remain.

Government Initiatives

- 🇮🇳 **Accessible India Campaign – Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan:**
 - It seeks to improve accessibility in
 - Built environment
 - Transportation systems
 - Information and communication technologies
- 🇮🇳 **Unique Disability ID – UDID:**
 - Provides a national database and a single disability

identity card to improve access to government benefits.

Assistance to Disabled Persons Scheme – ADIP:

- o Supports persons with disabilities through assistive devices and rehabilitation aids.

Skill development initiatives:

- o Aim at improving employability and economic independence.
- o These measures are important, but their reach and implementation need strengthening.

Way Forward for a Disabled-Friendly India

- * **Disability-inclusive Census** should capture all **21 specified disabilities under the RPwD Act** with trained enumerators and clear questionnaires.
- * **Universal Design** should become the norm in public infrastructure, ensuring accessibility in **buildings, roads, transport and public spaces**.
- * **Inclusive education** should be strengthened through **trained special educators, assistive technologies, accessible campuses and flexible examinations**.
- * **Inclusive employment** should focus on **reasonable accommodation, accessible workplaces, skill development and effective implementation of reservation**.
- * **Digital accessibility** should be ensured by making government and private digital services compatible with **screen readers, captions and other assistive technologies**.
- * **“Nothing About Us Without Us”** should guide policymaking by ensuring **direct participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations** in policy design and monitoring.

Conclusion

India has made significant legal progress through the **RPwD Act, 2016**, but genuine inclusion requires translating statutory rights into everyday accessibility and equal opportunity. A truly disabled-friendly India will emerge when **accessibility becomes a standard feature of governance, infrastructure, technology and social attitudes rather than a special concession**.

Sample Question

Q) India has adopted a rights-based approach towards persons with disabilities, yet significant barriers to their inclusion persist.” Examine the challenges in building a disabled-friendly India and suggest measures to ensure effective implementation of disability rights. **(15 marks)**

DEFINITION OF "INDUSTRY" AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy

PYQ Mapping

Q) Discuss the merits and demerits of the four 'Labour Codes' in the context of labour market reforms in India. What has been the progress so far? (2024)

Why in the News?

In August 2026, a **nine-judge Supreme Court Bench held that the expansive definition of "industry" laid down in the 1978 Bangalore Water Supply case will not govern the Industrial Relations Code, 2020**, which must be interpreted independently.

Introduction

The definition of "industry" determines which establishments and workers come within the framework of industrial-relations law and receive protections such as collective bargaining and remedies against unfair labour practices. Its interpretation therefore involves balancing workers' rights, managerial autonomy and changing economic realities.

What is an "Industry"?

Under labour law, the term "industry" is important because it determines whether an employer-employee relationship falls within the framework governing Industrial disputes, Trade unions and collective bargaining, Retrenchment and layoffs, Strikes and lockouts, Unfair labour practices and Labour dispute resolution. A broader definition generally brings **more workers and establishments under labour-law protection**, while a narrower definition may exclude certain activities.

Bangalore Water Supply Case, 1978

- ➔ **Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa**, decided by a **7-judge Supreme Court Bench**.
- ➔ **Expanded meaning of "industry" under Section 2(j) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947**, making the definition activity-based rather than profit-based.
- ➔ **Triple Test** required **systematic activity + employer-employee cooperation + production/distribution of goods or services to satisfy human wants**.
- ➔ **Profit motive was not essential**, allowing institutions such as **hospitals, educational institutions and public utilities** to potentially qualify as industries.
- ➔ **Core sovereign functions** such as **defence, judiciary and law-and-order functions** were excluded.

Dominant Nature Test

- ♣ The 1978 judgment also developed the **Dominant Nature Test** for organisations undertaking several different activities.
- ♣ If the dominant activity satisfied the characteristics of an industry, the organisation could generally be treated as an industry.
- ♣ This significantly expanded labour-law protection to workers employed in diverse sectors.

Industrial Relations Code, 2020

- 🔍 The IRC, 2020 introduced a new definition of "industry" under **Section 2(p)**, replacing the earlier Section 2(j) framework of the Industrial Disputes Act.
- 🔍 "Industry" broadly covers systematic activities carried out through **cooperation between employer and worker** for the **production, supply or distribution of goods or services** to satisfy human wants or wishes.
- 🔍 The new definition expressly excludes certain activities, including **charitable or philanthropic organisations, sovereign functions of government, domestic service and certain other specified activities**.
- 🔍 **Bangalore Water Supply's Triple Test cannot be automatically imported** into the new Code because the statutory language and exclusions have changed.
- 🔍 The IRC, 2020 provides a **more specific statutory framework** for determining what constitutes an industry.

Supreme Court's 2026 Ruling

- 🔍 **9-judge Bench ruling:** The Court held by majority that the **Bangalore Water Supply interpretation cannot automatically govern Section 2(p) of the Industrial Relations Code, 2020**.
- 🔍 **New approach:** "Industry" under the IRC must be interpreted through its **own text, legislative context and purpose**.
- 🔍 **Two legal positions:** The **Bangalore Water Supply precedent continues for disputes under the old Industrial Disputes Act**, while **future disputes under the IRC will be governed independently by Section 2(p)**.

Majority View

- ☀ **New legislation, new interpretation:** Parliament created a new statutory framework, so courts must primarily examine the **language and legislative intent of the IRC**.
- ☀ **Contemporary labour relations:** The interpretation should account for **changing economic conditions and the modern labour market**.

Dissenting View

- 🛡 **Labour protection concern:** The dissent argued that weakening the broad interpretation may **reduce workers' protection and collective bargaining rights**.
- 🛡 **Changing economy:** With India moving from **State dominance to Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation**, stronger labour safeguards remain important.
- 🛡 **Sovereign functions:** Government ownership alone does not automatically make an activity a **sovereign function**.

Implications of the Judgment

- 🌀 **Greater legal uncertainty:** The judgment creates a new interpretative space around Section 2(p) of the Industrial Relations Code, requiring courts to determine which establishments qualify as an "industry" under the new framework.
- 🌀 **Impact on workers' rights:** A narrower interpretation could limit access to mechanisms such as collective bargaining, industrial dispute resolution and protection against retrenchment for certain categories of workers.
- 🌀 **Greater managerial flexibility:** Employers may benefit from reduced litigation and greater clarity regarding the applicability of labour regulations, potentially supporting investment, employment generation and ease of doing business.
- 🌀 **Impact on public institutions:** Hospitals, educational institutions, municipal bodies and charitable organisations, which could fall within the broad *Bangalore Water Supply* interpretation, may now have their status determined specifically under the IRC, 2020.
- 🌀 **Federal implications:** Since labour is a **Concurrent List** subject, effective implementation requires coordination between the Union and State governments, while divergent interpretations by State authorities could create regulatory uncertainty.
- 🌀 **Impact on industrial peace:** A clear definition of "industry" is essential to determine **which workers**

are protected, what rights apply and which dispute-resolution mechanisms are available; prolonged ambiguity could increase litigation and industrial conflict.

Major Concerns

- **Possible dilution of labour protection:** A narrower interpretation of "industry" may exclude vulnerable workers from important industrial-relations protections and dispute-resolution mechanisms.
- **Increased litigation:** Since Section 2(p) of the IRC, 2020 requires independent interpretation, courts may initially face more disputes over whether particular establishments fall within its scope.
- **Risk of informalisation:** In an economy with a large informal workforce, employers may increasingly rely on contractual or informal arrangements to avoid labour obligations, potentially weakening worker security.
- **Challenges from gig and platform work:** Traditional employer–employee concepts may not adequately cover gig and platform workers, whose employment relationships are often fragmented and technology-mediated.
- **Weak bargaining power of workers:** Individual workers generally have less bargaining power than employers, making **trade unions and collective bargaining** important safeguards against unequal employment relationships.

Way Forward

- ✧ **Provide clear legal guidelines:** Courts and governments should develop predictable principles for interpreting Section 2(p) to reduce ambiguity and unnecessary litigation.
- ✧ **Limit the scope of sovereign functions:** Genuine sovereign functions may be treated differently, but the exception should not be expanded to cover ordinary economic, commercial or welfare activities.
- ✧ **Strengthen social security:** Even workers outside the conventional definition of "industry" should have access to **social security, grievance redressal and basic labour protections**.
- ✧ **Adapt to new forms of work:** Labour regulation should evolve to adequately address **gig workers, platform workers, contract labour, remote workers and technology-driven workplaces**.
- ✧ **Strengthen tripartite dialogue:** Regular consultation among **government, employers and workers** can help build consensus and reduce industrial conflicts.

* **Adopt a Flexicurity approach:** India should balance **labour-market flexibility with worker security**, combining ease of doing business with social protection and decent working conditions.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court ruling marks an important transition from the judicially developed labour-law framework of the **Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 to the statutory framework of the Industrial Relations Code, 2020**. The real test will be whether the new interpretation can simultaneously promote **investment and employment while preserving**

dignity, bargaining power and social protection for workers.

Sample Question

Q) The definition of 'industry' lies at the intersection of workers' rights and economic flexibility." In light of the Supreme Court's recent ruling, examine the implications of redefining 'industry' under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 for labour welfare and industrial relations in India. **(15 marks)**

YOJANA JULY 2026

VIKSIT BHARAT @ 2047

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND INDIA'S CIVILISATIONAL RENAISSANCE

Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi

- ➔ This governance philosophy integrates modern infrastructure, technology, and economic growth with the safeguarding of India's civilisational inheritance.

Gyan Bharatam Mission

- ➔ This flagship initiative aims to digitally map, catalog, and preserve over one crore historical manuscripts scattered across temples, libraries, and private collections.



National Mission on Cultural Mapping (Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar)

- ➔ This massive pan-India effort targets **6.5 lakh villages** to digitally document their unique cultural expressions, oral traditions, customs, and art forms.

PRASHAD

- ➔ Focuses exclusively on rejuvenating pilgrimage sites and augmenting spiritual heritage with modern, accessible infrastructure.

Swadesh Darshan 2.0

- ➔ Drives the sustainable and responsible development of thematic tourist circuits, merging heritage conservation with local employment generation and economic growth.

PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan

- ➔ Launched in October 2021, this **₹100 lakh crore initiative** integrates the infrastructure planning of over 16 Central Ministries and 36 States/UTs onto a single digital platform.
- ➔ It uses **geospatial mapping with over 1,600 data layers** to replace siloed departmental working with coordinated, data-driven spatial planning for economic hubs and transport networks.

National Logistics Policy (NLP) 2022

- ➔ Introduced to complement PM Gati Shakti, the NLP focuses on process reforms to **bring India's logistics costs down to global benchmarks (below 10% of GDP)** by 2030.
- ➔ It aims to improve India's ranking in the Logistics Performance Index to the top 25 countries by utilizing technology, standardization of physical assets, and skilled manpower.

Sagarmala Programme

- ➔ Approved in 2015, this flagship initiative of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways focuses on **port-led development** to harness India's 7,500 km coastline and 14,500 km of navigable waterways.



LONG TERM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR ATMANIRBHARTA IN FERTILISER

National Coal Gasification Mission

- ➔ Aims to achieve 100 Million Tons (MT) of coal gasification by 2030, utilizing India's abundant coal reserves to produce syngas and ammonia.

Soil Health Card Scheme

- ➔ Has successfully distributed over 26 crore soil health cards nationwide to inform farmers of specific nutrient deficiencies in their land.



Crop Diversification Missions

- ➔ Initiatives like the **National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Seeds** and the **National Pulse Mission** actively steer farmers away from water- and fertilizer-guzzling crops like paddy and sugarcane.

Digital Agriculture Mission (Agri Stack)



- ➔ Has created over **9.5 crore unique Farmer IDs** backed by updated land ownership details and integrated with a massive Digital Crop Survey covering over 30 crore plots.
- ➔ This robust Digital Public Infrastructure facilitates precise, crop-specific fertilizer advisories and aims to curb illegal diversion of subsidized agricultural inputs

INDIA'S HEALTH LANDSCAPE: PROGRESS, PROMISE AND THE PATH AHEAD

Maternal Health Interventions

- ➔ Includes financial assistance schemes like Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK), and Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA).
- ➔ These initiatives aim to eliminate out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) and enhance the quality of care from antenatal to post-natal services



Mission Parivar Vikas

- ➔ A targeted **family planning program** designed to expand access, drive meaningful behavior change, and promote reproductive autonomy.
- ➔ It has successfully raised the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) to 69.1%

Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)

- ➔ A major **Government Financed Health Insurance Scheme (GFHI)** providing cashless treatment to enhance financial protection and healthcare equity.
- ➔ It has contributed to a threefold increase in health insurance coverage, helping drive total out-of-pocket health expenditure down from 64.2% to 43.4%.

Universal Immunisation Programme

- ➔ Has achieved an 87.1% vaccination coverage rate for children aged 12-23 months, with 95% of these vaccinations provided by public health facilities.
- ➔ A major milestone is the rotavirus vaccine, where coverage more than doubled from 36.4% to 85.4%, significantly reducing severe childhood diarrhoea.

Affordable Medicine Initiatives

- ➔ Features programs like the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), AMRIT Pharmacies, and Free Drugs and Diagnostics Services.

LEVERAGING TACIT KNOWLEDGE FOR NATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE

Project Kaundinya

- ➔ This project successfully reconceptualized the **ancestral Kerala tradition of stitched boat construction**, showcasing the viability of indigenous engineering.
- ➔ In January 2026, a full-scale ocean vessel built entirely with coir rope and natural resin—without a single iron nail—completed an 18-day voyage from Porbandar to Muscat.



Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)

- ➔ The TKDL is a pioneering digital repository designed specifically to combat biopiracy by translating and digitizing ancient texts and traditional Indian knowledge



National Innovation Foundation-India (NIF)

- ➔ The NIF is a central institution dedicated to **scouting, documenting, validating, and protecting grassroots innovations** across India.
- ➔ It currently maintains a massive repository of over 3.75 lakh technological ideas and has facilitated over 1,478 patent filings for grassroots innovators and farmers

EDUCATION AND SKILLS FOR A FUTURE READY INDIA

National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)

- ➔ Encourages direct partnerships between educational institutions and industries to facilitate **hands-on learning**.
- ➔ Prepares the workforce for future demands through practical workplace exposure, mentorship, and continuous upskilling.



WEEKLY DOSSIERS

POVERTY IN INDIA: FROM INCOME POVERTY TO MULTIDIMENSIONAL DEPRIVATION

Poverty is no longer seen merely as **lack of income**, but also as deprivation in **health, education, housing, sanitation and living standards**.

Changing Nature of Poverty

- ◆ **Multidimensional poverty has declined significantly:** According to **NITI Aayog**, it fell from **29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23**, with about **24.82 crore people escaping multidimensional poverty**.
- ◆ **Extreme poverty has also declined**, but many households remain vulnerable to shocks such as **illness, unemployment, inflation, crop failure and natural disasters**.

Major Challenges

- ◆ **Employment:** Around **90% of India's workforce is in the informal sector**, making workers vulnerable to low wages, underemployment and inadequate social security.
- ◆ **Regional disparities:** Poverty remains concentrated in backward States, districts and rural regions due to weak infrastructure and limited employment opportunities.
- ◆ **Rural vulnerability:** Small landholdings, rainfall dependence and climate shocks continue to threaten rural livelihoods.
- ◆ **Urban poverty:** Migrant and informal workers face insecure employment, high housing costs and limited social protection.
- ◆ **Inequality of opportunity:** Limited access to quality **education, healthcare, skills, digital connectivity and formal credit** can perpetuate intergenerational poverty.

Government Measures

- ◆ **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):** Provides employment

security to rural households.

- ◆ **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN):** Provides income support to eligible farmers.
- ◆ **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** Provides food security to vulnerable households.
- ◆ **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY):** Supports access to housing.
- ◆ **Ayushman Bharat:** Reduces the financial burden of healthcare.
- ◆ **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM):** Promotes self-help groups and rural livelihoods.
- ◆ **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile (JAM):** Improve targeted welfare delivery and financial inclusion.

Way Forward

- ◆ Promote **labour-intensive sectors and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** to generate productive employment.
- ◆ Strengthen **portable social security**, especially for migrant and informal workers.
- ◆ Invest in **health, education, nutrition and skills** to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.
- ◆ Use **multidimensional indicators** for better identification and targeting of deprived households.
- ◆ Promote **climate-resilient and diversified rural livelihoods**.

Conclusion

- ◆ India must move beyond merely reducing **income poverty** towards addressing **multidimensional deprivation and vulnerability**. The objective should be to ensure that people not only **escape poverty but also remain resiliently out of it**.

FROM FOOD SECURITY TO NUTRITION SECURITY: INDIA'S HUNGER CHALLENGE

Hunger is not merely the absence of calories; it also includes inadequate intake of **proteins, vitamins and minerals** necessary for healthy physical and cognitive development.

Food Security and Nutrition Security

- ◆ **Food security:** Ensures access to sufficient quantities of food.
- ◆ **Nutrition security:** Ensures adequate **calories, proteins, micronutrients, dietary diversity, safe water and healthcare.**
- ◆ Thus, a person may consume sufficient calories but still suffer from **“hidden hunger”** due to micronutrient deficiencies.

Major Causes

- ◆ **Cereal-centred food system:** Dependence on rice and wheat addresses calorie deficiency but may not adequately provide proteins and micronutrients.
- ◆ **Poor dietary diversity:** Poor households may have limited access to fruits, vegetables, milk, eggs and pulses.
- ◆ **Maternal malnutrition:** Poor maternal nutrition can lead to low birth weight and intergenerational malnutrition.
- ◆ **Poor sanitation and disease:** Repeated infections and diarrhoea reduce nutrient absorption.
- ◆ **Poor infant feeding:** Inadequate breastfeeding and complementary feeding affect children during the critical early years.

Key Data

- ◆ According to **National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), 2019-21, 35.5% of children under five were stunted, while 19.3% were wasted.**
- ◆ **57% of women aged 15–49 years and 67.1% of children aged 6–59 months** were anaemic under NFHS-5.
- ◆ This shows that **food availability does not automatically translate into nutrition security.**

Government Measures

- ◆ **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** Provides subsidised foodgrains to eligible beneficiaries.
- ◆ **Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN):**

Provides nutritious meals to schoolchildren.

- ◆ **Mission Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0:** Focuses on maternal and child nutrition.
- ◆ **POSHAN Tracker:** Digitally monitors Anganwadi services and beneficiaries.
- ◆ **Anaemia Mukh Bharat:** Promotes iron supplementation, screening, deworming and awareness.

Major Challenges

- ◆ Continued **cereal-centric approach** to food security.
- ◆ Inadequate **dietary diversity and micronutrient intake.**
- ◆ Uneven quality of **Anganwadi services.**
- ◆ Persistent **maternal and child anaemia.**
- ◆ Weak convergence between **food, health, sanitation and nutrition programmes.**
- ◆ Climate change can increase food prices and affect nutritional access.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Shift from food to nutrition security** by promoting pulses, millets, eggs, milk, fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ **Prioritise the first 1,000 days,** from pregnancy to a child's second birthday.
- ◆ **Strengthen Anganwadis** through better infrastructure, trained workers and growth monitoring.
- ◆ Promote **nutrition-sensitive agriculture,** focusing on diverse and nutrient-rich crops.
- ◆ Improve awareness regarding **breastfeeding, complementary feeding and balanced diets.**
- ◆ Ensure convergence between **food security, healthcare, sanitation, drinking water and education.**

Conclusion

- ◆ India has made considerable progress in ensuring **food availability,** but its next challenge is ensuring **adequate, diverse and nutritious food.** The policy focus must therefore shift from **“enough food for survival”** to **“adequate nutrition for human development.”**

INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY AND HUNGER: WOMEN AND CHILDREN DIMENSION

Poverty and malnutrition reinforce each other and can begin **before birth,** creating a cycle of poor health, weak education, low productivity and persistent poverty.

How Poverty is Transmitted Across Generations

- ◆ **NFHS-5 (2019–21): 35.5% of children under five were stunted and 19.3% were wasted, while 57% of women aged 15–49 were anaemic.**
- ◆ This demonstrates that poverty is not merely an income problem but also a **human-capital challenge**.

Women: A Critical Link

- ◆ **Nutritional discrimination:** Women and girls may receive less nutritious food, increasing the risk of anaemia and poor maternal health.
- ◆ **Maternal health:** Poor maternal nutrition increases risks of **low birth weight, premature birth and child malnutrition**.
- ◆ **Limited economic autonomy:** Lack of access to **income, property, credit and employment** reduces women's bargaining power over household spending.
- ◆ **Unpaid care work:** Cooking, childcare and eldercare reduce women's ability to participate in paid employment, reinforcing household poverty.

Children: The Long-Term Impact

- ◆ Childhood malnutrition can impair **brain development, immunity, learning and physical growth**.
- ◆ Poor nutrition and education in childhood can reduce **productivity and earnings in adulthood**, reproducing poverty.

Vulnerable Groups

- ◆ **Scheduled Tribes (STs):** Geographical isolation and limited access to services increase vulnerability.
- ◆ **Scheduled Castes (SCs):** Social exclusion and limited economic opportunities can reinforce deprivation.
- ◆ **Migrant workers:** Lack of portability of welfare benefits can restrict access to food and social protection.
- ◆ **Landless labourers and single-women households:** Face greater income and livelihood insecurity.

Government Measures

- ◆ **Mission Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0:** Maternal and child nutrition.
- ◆ **PM POSHAN:** Nutritional support for schoolchildren.
- ◆ **Anaemia Mukht Bharat:** Addresses anaemia among women, adolescents and children.
- ◆ **Anganwadi Services:** Nutrition, health support and

preschool education.

- ◆ **Janani Suraksha Yojana:** Promotes institutional deliveries.
- ◆ **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** Provides maternity support.
- ◆ **National Food Security Act (NFSA):** Ensures food security for vulnerable households.
- ◆ **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM):** Promotes women's Self-Help Groups and livelihoods.
- ◆ **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):** Promotes the survival, protection and education of girls.

Major Challenges

- ◆ **Fragmented implementation:** Nutrition, health, sanitation and education programmes often operate without adequate convergence.
- ◆ **Early marriage and pregnancy:** Increase risks of maternal and child malnutrition.
- ◆ **Intra-household inequality:** Food availability does not guarantee equal nutrition for women and girls.
- ◆ **Weak service delivery:** Poor-quality schools and Anganwadis reduce programme effectiveness.
- ◆ **Economic shocks:** Illness, unemployment and disasters can reduce food consumption and force children out of school.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Women's economic empowerment:** Expand access to **skills, employment, property, credit and Self-Help Groups**.
- ◆ **Early childhood investment:** Strengthen nutrition, healthcare and early childhood education.
- ◆ **Girls' education:** Reduce dropout and ensure transition to secondary and higher education.
- ◆ **District-level targeting:** Use data to identify regions with concentrated poverty and malnutrition.
- ◆ **Crisis-responsive social protection:** Ensure **portable food entitlements, livelihood support and emergency assistance** during shocks.

Conclusion

- ◆ Breaking intergenerational poverty requires a **life-cycle approach** that invests in women and children. The ultimate objective should be to ensure that **a child's opportunities depend on capabilities rather than the circumstances of birth**.

BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

Supreme Court on SIR of Electoral Rolls

- ♦ The Supreme Court upheld the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, stating that accurate voter lists are essential for free and fair elections. It held that **Article 324** empowers the Election Commission to revise electoral rolls, while **Article 327** allows Parliament to make election laws. The Court accepted that migration, duplicate entries, deaths and ineligible voters justify periodic revision.
- ♦ It also clarified that the Election Commission can verify citizenship for voter eligibility but cannot finally decide citizenship, which must be determined under the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Supreme Court Upholds Death by Hanging

- ♦ The Supreme Court has upheld hanging as the prescribed method of execution, dismissing a PIL challenging its constitutionality under Article 21.
- ♦ The Court relied on the principle of stare decisis, noting that **Deena v. Union of India 1983** had already upheld hanging and was later approved by a Constitution Bench in **Shashi Nayar v. Union of India 1992**. It held that there was no conclusive scientific evidence proving that alternatives such as lethal injection are more humane or painless.
- ♦ The judgment reaffirmed that even death row prisoners retain the right to dignity, but a smaller Bench cannot overturn a settled precedent without significant constitutional, legislative or scientific developments. The Court, however, left open the possibility of future reconsideration if stronger evidence emerges.

Supreme Court on PCPNDT Act Investigations

- ♦ The Supreme Court has held that police cannot independently investigate offences under the **Pre Conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994**, which seeks to prevent sex selection and misuse of prenatal diagnostic techniques.
- ♦ The Court observed that offences under the Act involve technical medical issues and must primarily be investigated by the designated authorities under the law, while police can only play a supplementary role. However, police remain free to investigate separate offences arising under general criminal law. The judgment reinforces the principle that special laws must be enforced through the specialised mechanism created by Parliament.

Supreme Court on OBC Creamy Layer Income Test

- ♦ The Supreme Court in the **Rohith Nathan case** held that parental salary income alone cannot be used to classify OBC candidates as creamy layer where equivalence of PSU or private sector posts with government posts has not been established. It ruled that the income and wealth test should operate only as a residual criterion and that salary and agricultural income were excluded under the 1993 DoPT framework.
- ♦ The Court found that counting salary for PSU and private employees while excluding it for government employees amounted to hostile discrimination under Article 14. The Centre has now sought clarification, arguing that retrospective implementation could reopen past recruitments, affect seniority and create cascading claims across reserved and unreserved categories.
- ♦ The issue highlights the need to balance substantive equality in reservations with administrative certainty and fairness in public recruitment.

Kaziranga, Mining and Ecological Governance

- ♦ A Supreme Court appointed Central Empowered Committee criticised the Assam government for inadequate action against mining near Kaziranga National Park and the Karbi Anglong hills, despite a 2019 Supreme Court order restricting mining and new construction in sensitive areas.
- ♦ The region is ecologically crucial because the Karbi Anglong hills act as wildlife refuges during floods and contain important animal corridors connecting Kaziranga with surrounding habitats. The panel also flagged delays in identifying catchment areas, notifying nine animal corridors and preparing a proper wildlife management plan.
- ♦ The issue highlights the importance of protecting Eco Sensitive Zones, maintaining natural drainage systems, preserving wildlife corridors and ensuring strict compliance with judicial and environmental safeguards while balancing development with ecological security.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are the District Magistrate of a district where several sanitation workers are still being engaged informally to clean septic tanks and sewers without protective equipment. Official records, however, show that manual scavenging has been eliminated in the district. One day, three sanitation workers die due to toxic gas exposure while cleaning a private septic tank. The contractor claims that the workers entered the tank voluntarily and denies responsibility. The municipal body argues that the work was outsourced and therefore it cannot be held directly accountable. During your inquiry, you discover that some officials were aware of the practice but ignored it because mechanised cleaning equipment was inadequate and there was pressure to keep the city clean before an upcoming major public event. You also learn that most of the workers belong to economically and socially vulnerable communities and fear losing their livelihood if they complain. At the same time, immediately stopping all sanitation work without arranging alternatives could create serious public health problems in the city.

Questions

- What are the major ethical issues involved in the case?
- Identify the stakeholders and explain the conflicting interests involved.
- As District Magistrate, what immediate and long term actions would you take?
- How would you balance the dignity and safety of sanitation workers with the need to maintain essential public sanitation services?
- Which ethical values should guide a civil servant in dealing with such a situation?

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- Innovation:** Engineer **Vetrivel's initiative** developed durable concrete bird-water troughs after metal tins rusted and concerns arose that regular food feeding could disrupt birds' natural behaviour. **More than 6,450 low-cost troughs** have since been distributed free across Tamil Nadu, involving schools and communities in bird conservation and maintenance.
- Inclusivity:** Bela's Colours Centre for Learning uses an individualised, skill-based approach for autistic students, integrating academics, therapy, arts, sports and real-world activities to build communication and independence. The Bengaluru-based centre has supported 100+ autistic individuals and counselled 290+ families.
- Environmental Ethics:** Chitlapakkam Rising, a citizen-led movement in Chennai, revived the neglected Chitlapakkam Lake through mass mobilisation, scientific restoration using a 4D model, and government engagement. The campaign saw 2,000+ residents participate, leading to a ₹25 crore restoration sanction and transforming the sewage-filled lake into a functional waterbody.
- Compassion:** The flood in Nepal, affecting Rasuwa and Nuwakot, prompted India to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) by airlifting 10 tonnes of relief supplies through IAF C-17 and C-130 aircraft, while keeping NDRF teams and helicopters ready for rescue and evacuation.
- Empowerment:** Kumudini's Maheera Farmer Producer Company Limited (FPCL) in Odisha has grown to 960 members, nearly 70% women, using collective farming, e-NAM market access and agricultural drones to reduce costs and increase incomes. Its drones can spray one acre in about six minutes, cutting spraying costs by 60–70%, while creating new opportunities for women's economic independence.
- Social Responsibility:** Rudra, Bhusawal Railway Division's "hospital on wheels", is a refurbished railway coach launched in January 2025 to provide healthcare closer to railway employees and their families. By March 2026, it had served 4,321 beneficiaries, with diagnostics, specialist consultations, medicines and teleconsultation helping overcome long-distance healthcare access barriers.
- Social Justice:** Edamalakkudy, Kerala's first tribal panchayat in Idukki, faces severe connectivity gaps, forcing the Muthuvan tribal community to carry critically ill patients on bamboo stretchers through dense forests.

MODEL ESSAY

"Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding "

Introduction

- Quote by **Albert Einstein**
- The Mizo Peace Accord (1986), signed by PM Rajiv Gandhi and MNF leader Laldenga, ended the 1966–1986 Mizo insurgency, granted full statehood to Mizoram, and integrated MNF rebels into democratic politics.
- Showed that lasting **"positive peace"** requires political dialogue and reconciliation, not merely military suppression or "negative peace."

Why Force Fails and Understanding Prevails

- **Negative vs. Positive Peace:** Johan Galtung distinguishes negative peace (absence of violence) from positive peace (social justice and equity), with lasting peace requiring structural reforms.
- **Asymmetric Warfare and Resilience of Will:** Military superiority cannot easily defeat highly motivated insurgents, as demonstrated by the **Vietnam and Afghanistan** experiences.
- **Resolving Left-Wing Extremism (Naxalism):** India's response to **Naxalism** shows that security measures must be complemented by development, tribal integration, and addressing socio-economic grievances.
- **Linguistic Federalism vs. Forced Assimilation:** India's **States Reorganisation Act, 1956** accommodated linguistic diversity, unlike Sri Lanka's **Sinhala Only Act**, which contributed to prolonged ethnic conflict.
- **Truth and Reconciliation Mechanisms:** South Africa's **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** promoted restorative justice and reconciliation after Apartheid instead of widespread retributive violence.

The Tragic Necessity of Force

- **Failure of Appeasement:** Diplomatic concessions can embolden expansionist powers when restraint is seen as weakness. **Eg: Munich Conference (1938)**, appeasement failed to prevent Hitler's aggression.
- **Halting Active Genocide:** Immediate coercive intervention may be necessary when mass

atrocities are underway. **Eg: Rwandan Genocide (1994)**

- **Apocalyptic & Theocratic Non-State Actors:** Groups rejecting negotiation may require military neutralisation. **Eg: ISIS** was dismantled through coordinated military operations.
- **State Monopoly on Violence:** A state needs legitimate coercive authority to prevent violent anarchy. **Eg: Hobbes' Leviathan**, where the sovereign maintains order through coercive power.
- **Defensive Sovereignty Against Aggression:** Armed resistance can be essential to preserve sovereignty against external invasion. **Eg: Ukraine since 2022.**

Synthesis

- **Complementary Approach:** Force creates the **security space** for dialogue, while understanding addresses the **root causes** of conflict and builds sustainable peace.
- **Balance between Force and Understanding:** Relying only on understanding can enable aggression, while excessive force can become tyranny; effective governance requires **proportionate force followed by reconciliation and reform.**

Conclusion

- The **Mizo Accord** showed that military force can protect territorial integrity, but only **political reconciliation** can sustainably integrate alienated communities into the constitutional fold.
- **A strong state needs both deterrence and dialogue:** the sword protects peace, while the olive branch sustains it.

Sample Quotes

- The tyrant dies and his rule is over, the martyr dies and his rule begins- Kierkegaard
- We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.- Oscar Wilde
- To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child- Cicero

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS II: EDUCATION

→ Private coaching in India

- » **High dependence on private coaching:** About **27% of India's schoolchildren** take paid lessons outside school, indicating gaps in the quality of in-school learning.
- » **Strong geographical variation:** Coaching is highest in **Tripura (79%) and West Bengal (75%)**, while it is much lower in **Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh (8% each)**, showing that **location matters more than income alone**.
- » **Income is not the primary determinant:** Bihar (**53%**) has a higher coaching participation rate than wealthier **Delhi (39%)**, while high-income Kerala records **28%**, suggesting that coaching often acts as a **substitute for inadequate schooling rather than a luxury**.
- » **Caste gap largely reflects geography:** Coaching participation is **34% among General-category children, 26% among Dalit and Other Backward Class (OBC) children, and 14% among Adivasi children**; however, after controlling for State and household spending, the General–Dalit/OBC gap largely disappears.
- » **Adivasi disadvantage persists:** Even after accounting for State, household spending, age, sex and schooling stage, an **approximately 9-percentage-point gap** remains for Adivasi children, highlighting the role of **remoteness and poor physical access to coaching facilities**.



GS III: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

→ India's R&D Funding System

- » Nearly **80% of Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) funding is concentrated in IITs**, highlighting the need for wider distribution of research funding among universities and institutions.
- » **Fragmented funding data:** Research-funding information is scattered across multiple agencies such as the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** and **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**, making it difficult to detect duplicate or overlapping projects.



GS III: CLIMATE CHANGE

→ Climate change is causing linguistic erosion:

- » A *Losing Words, Losing Worlds* survey found that **nearly 100 ecological terms across 22 Indian languages** are fading or already lost, linking **biodiversity loss with cultural loss**.
- » **Loss of traditional ecological knowledge:** Terms such as **"shenvti hawa"** in Maharashtra helped fishermen predict pomfret movement, while **"jeth ke baadal"** in Bihar indicated conditions for rice sowing; changing climate patterns are making such indigenous knowledge less reliable.
- » **Climate change is also creating new vocabulary:** Communities are developing terms such as **"bina nishaan"** for unannounced rains and **"garmi ke baad seedha sardi"** for an abrupt transition from heat to winter, showing how language adapts to emerging climatic realities.



GS II: HEALTH

→ Private healthcare expansion:

- » Private and foreign capital is essential for expanding hospital infrastructure, technology and tertiary care, but excessive corporatisation can raise costs and reduce accessibility.
- » **Information asymmetry:** Since doctors possess greater medical knowledge than patients, profit-driven incentives may encourage **unnecessary tests, procedures, hospitalisation and medicines**.

→ Cancer in Children

- » **High burden:** India recorded an estimated **25,939 childhood cancer cases in 2022**, accounting for **68.6% of SAARC's total**, with leukaemia being the most common.
- » **Data gap:** Cancer-registry coverage is only around **15% of India's population**, with rural areas particularly underrepresented, making the true burden and regional patterns difficult to assess.
- » **Access gap:** Despite **80–90% cure rates for childhood leukaemia**, delayed diagnosis, malnutrition, treatment abandonment, high relapse costs and inadequate specialised paediatric oncology services create unequal survival outcomes.



GS III: ENVIRONMENT

→ Monsoon: Climate Models and Prediction Challenges

- » Climate models predict **El Niño with ~80% accuracy**, but monsoon rainfall prediction is only around **60% accurate**, while local and sub-seasonal forecasts remain more uncertain.
- » **2026 anomaly**: India received **40% below-normal rainfall in June**, followed by **1% above-normal rainfall in July**, showing rapid shifts that seasonal averages fail to capture.
- » **Need for high-resolution forecasting**: All-India Monsoon Rainfall (AIMR) can hide severe regional variations; therefore, forecasts need to incorporate **land-use change, urbanisation, deforestation and irrigation** to provide farm- and neighbourhood-level warnings.



GS III: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

→ The Central Himalaya has lost over 20% of its glacier area in three decades, increasing the risk of GLOFs and flash floods.

- » **Natural disasters caused over 45 million internal displacements globally in 2024**, highlighting their growing humanitarian cost.
- » **Nepal may require \$4–5 billion, nearly one-tenth of its economy, for reconstruction**, showing how disasters can reverse development gains.
- » **Poorer countries are often more vulnerable but less prepared**, underlining the need to shift from **relief-centric disaster management to resilience and preparedness**.



GS III: AGRICULTURE

→ India's Urea Policy

- » **National Investment Policy for Urea-2026**: Aims to achieve **self-reliance in urea production** by attracting investment in new gas-based manufacturing units and reducing import dependence.

- » **Key reforms**: Introduces **12–16% Return on Equity (RoE) band**, separates fixed and variable costs, and addresses foreign-exchange risks to make investment more viable.
- » **Subsidy burden**: Urea subsidy reached **₹1.42 lakh crore in 2025-26**, highlighting the fiscal burden and concerns over excessive urea use and **nutrient imbalance**.



GS II: Electoral Reforms & Representation

→ Arbitrary deletion concerns:

- » Nearly **one-fifth of electors were deleted** from draft SIR rolls in Telangana and Karnataka, raising concerns about the fairness and accuracy of electoral roll revision.
- » **Lack of uniform standards**: Wide variation in classifying voters as **"Shifted" or "Absent"**—for example, **83% of deletions in Jubilee Hills were marked 'Shifted'**—suggests inconsistent field-level implementation.
- » **Right to vote**: The **2023 Manual on Electoral Rolls** states that temporary absence does not end a person's ordinary residence, raising questions about deletion merely on the ground of being **"Absent."**
- » **Need for electoral safeguards**: SIR exercises require **clear definitions, standard operating procedures, transparency of deletion data, notice and opportunity to be heard**, ensuring that electoral roll purification does not lead to wrongful disenfranchisement.

→ Youth participation is uneven:

- » In the 2024 Lok Sabha election, turnout among **18–21-year-olds was about 6 percentage points below the average**, showing relatively lower participation among first-time voters.
- » **Strong State-level variation**: While only **41% of 18–21-year-olds voted in Bihar**, youth turnout reached **93% in West Bengal and 90% in Tamil Nadu**, indicating that youth participation is highly context-dependent.

CHERRY PICKS OF THE WEEK

NEUROMORPHIC COMPUTING:

- It refers to computer systems designed to imitate the structure and functioning of the human brain. Such chips can perform artificial intelligence tasks with very low energy consumption and are important for robotics and edge computing.

BASE EDITING:

- It is a precision gene editing technique that changes a single DNA base without cutting both strands of DNA. It may help correct disease causing genetic mutations.

PHOTONIC COMPUTING:

- It uses photons or light instead of electrons for computation and data transmission. It may enable faster and more energy efficient artificial intelligence and communication systems.

CRYOCONITE:

- It is dark dust containing mineral particles and microorganisms that accumulates on glaciers. It absorbs more solar radiation and can accelerate glacier melting.

THERMOKARST:

- It refers to irregular landforms produced when ice rich permafrost melts and the ground surface collapses. It can create ponds, depressions and unstable terrain.