



FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> CORRUPTION > CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT > PRIVATE SPACE: CHANGING ROLE OF ISRO

13th JULY, 2026 - 19th JULY, 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**

KASTURI SHA
AIR 68

MANJIMA P
AIR 235

FABI RASHEED
AIR 71

SWATHI S BABU
AIR 522

OORMILA J S
AIR 561

WOMEN IN POWER

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PRIVATE SPACE: CHANGING ROLE OF ISRO

Syllabus: GS III - Science & technology

PYQ MAPPING

Q) What is the main task of India's third moon mission which could not be achieved in its earlier mission? List the countries that have achieved this task. Introduce the subsystems in the spacecraft launched and explain the role of the Virtual Launch Control Centre' at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre which contributed to the successful launch from Sriharikota. **(2023)**

Q) Launched on 25th December, 2021, James Webb Space Telescope has been much in the news since then. What are its unique features which make it superior to its predecessor Space Telescopes? What are the key goals of this mission? What potential benefits does it hold for the human race? **(2022)**

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Indian Space Policy 2023: Formally allows private participation across upstream and downstream segments of the space economy.

Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe): Acts as a single-window regulator

IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR

☀️ **Innovation boost:** Private startups are driving cutting-edge innovations which drastically reduce manufacturing time

○ **Example:** Agnikul's single-piece 3D-printed engine

☀️ **Cost efficiency:** Private participation enables **low-cost, on-demand launch services**, improving global competitiveness

○ **Example:** Skyroot's Vikram-1 designed for affordable small-satellite launches.

☀️ **Economic growth:** India's space economy is projected

EXAMPLES OF PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES

♣️ **Skyroot Aerospace:** Developed Vikram series rockets; achieved India's first private orbital launch milestone.

♣️ **Agnikul Cosmos:** Building customizable small launch vehicles with 3D-printed engines (Agnilet).

♣️ **Pixxel:** Developing high-resolution earth observation

WHY IN NEWS

India's first privately developed launch vehicle, **Vikram-1**, placed several technology demonstration satellites in Low Earth orbit (LEO) on July 18 by Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace.

INTRODUCTION

India's space sector is undergoing a paradigm shift from a state-dominated model to a collaborative ecosystem with increasing private participation. This transformation, backed by policy reforms and institutional mechanisms, is redefining the role of ISRO from an operator to an enabler of space activities.

authorising and supervising private space activities.

NewSpace India Limited (NSIL): Commercialises ISRO technologies and facilitates industry participation in launches and satellite building.

to grow significantly with private investment and startups, aiming to expand from ~\$8 billion to ~\$44 billion by 2033

○ **Examples:** Rise of firms like Pixxel, Dhruva Space

☀️ **Strategic capability:** Private launch vehicles enable **responsive space capabilities**, allowing rapid satellite deployment or replacement during emergencies

☀️ **Employment & ecosystem:** Growth of 200+ space startups fosters **job creation, supply chains, and domestic manufacturing ecosystems**

satellite constellations for commercial data services.

♣️ **Bellatrix Aerospace:** Working on advanced propulsion systems and "space tug" technologies.

♣️ **TakeMe2Space:** Developed indigenous satellite battery achieving flight heritage on private launch.

CHANGING ROLE OF ISRO

- ★ **From operator to enabler:** ISRO is shifting from manufacturing and launching to enabling private players through policy and technology transfer.
- ★ **Focus on R&D:** Concentrating on advanced missions (deep space, reusable rockets, security) instead of routine launches.
- ★ **Outsourcing production:** Delegating manufacturing

of launch vehicles (e.g., PSLV) to industry partners like HAL and L&T.

- ★ **Capacity building:** Providing infrastructure, testing facilities, and mentorship to startups via IN-SPACe.
- ★ **Commercial collaboration:** Working with NSIL to monetize space assets and expand global market presence.

CHALLENGES

- **Regulatory uncertainty:** Evolving legal framework may create ambiguity for investors and startups.
- **High capital requirement:** Space ventures require long gestation periods and heavy investment.
- **Talent drain:** ISRO facing competition from private

firms for skilled scientists.

- **Technological barriers:** Advanced propulsion, reusable systems, and deep-space tech are still limited.
- **Security concerns:** Dual-use technologies raise national security and data protection issues.

WAY FORWARD

- ✱ **Comprehensive space law:** India needs a **clear and robust legal framework** covering liability, insurance, licensing, and dispute resolution to ensure certainty for private players
 - o **Example:** The proposed *Space Activities Bill* aims to define liability norms for private launches and satellite operations
- ✱ **Strengthen ecosystem:** Expanding **funding support, incubation centres, and PPP models** will accelerate startup growth and innovation
- ✱ **Skill development:** Promoting **specialised education in space technology, AI, and aerospace engineering** is crucial to build human capital and prevent brain

drain.

- o Example: Initiatives like ISRO's IIRS programmes and collaborations with IITs
- ✱ **Global integration:** Encouraging **FDI, international partnerships, and integration into global supply chains** will enhance competitiveness
 - o Example: Collaboration with NASA, ESA, and increasing foreign investment in Indian space startups
- ✱ **Balanced model:** India must adopt a **hybrid model where ISRO retains strategic control** (defence, deep space missions) while private players handle commercial and operational aspects

CONCLUSION

The integration of private players with ISRO's expertise is crucial for enhancing India's global competitiveness in the space economy. A balanced approach combining innovation, regulation, and strategic oversight will determine the long-term success of this transition.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Evaluate the importance of private sector participation in India's space economy with suitable examples **(10 marks) (150 words)**

CORRUPTION : THREAT FOR INDIA

Syllabus: GS II - Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Electronic cash transfer system for welfare schemes is an ambitious project to minimize corruption, eliminate wastage, and facilitate reforms. Comment. (2013)*

WHY IN NEWS

The Jantar Mantar protests following the NEET paper leak have renewed the debate on whether corruption poses the greatest threat to India's democratic governance and future development.

INTRODUCTION

India ranked 91st out of 182 countries with a score of 39/100 in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2026, highlighting persistent challenge it poses to good governance and inclusive development

SHORT TAKES

- Transparency International defines corruption as, “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. It represents a fundamental violation of the social contract, where duty-bearers substitute public interest and administrative integrity with self-interest, thereby dismantling societal trust and institutional credibility

DRIVERS OF CORRUPTION

Socio-economic Inequality :

- o A wide gap between the rich and the poor creates unequal access to public services and decision-makers. Wealthy individuals and businesses may use money or influence to secure licences, contracts, or preferential treatment, while poorly paid officials may become more vulnerable to accepting bribes.

Political Interference :

- o Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (amended in 2018) requires prior government approval before investigating public servants for official decisions, delaying or discouraging anti-corruption investigations.
- o **Example-** Delays in sanction for probing senior bureaucrats.

Bureaucratic Red Tape :

- o Lengthy and convoluted bureaucratic procedures and excessive regulations can drive individuals and businesses to engage in corrupt practices to expedite processes or bypass obstacles.

Weak Institutional Framework :

- o Institutions like the Lokpal, CBI, and Vigilance Commissions suffer from delays, vacancies, and limited autonomy, reducing the effectiveness of anti-corruption enforcement.
- o **Example-** Delayed appointment of Information Commissioners has increased the RTI backlog.

Digital Divide in E-Governance :

- o Digitalisation has reduced face-to-face bribery but has created new intermediaries due to limited internet access and digital literacy, excluding vulnerable groups from public services.
- o **Example-** Citizens often depend on cyber cafes, which charge excess fees for welfare applications.

Crony Capitalism :

- o Close links between political power and business interests lead to preferential allocation of public resources, contracts, and policy benefits, undermining fair competition.
- o **Example-** Electoral Bonds Scheme raised concerns over opaque corporate political funding.

IMPACTS OF CORRUPTION

Social Impacts:

- o **Stunted Social Development:** It causes diversion of funds from critical social programs, leading to stunted social development
 - Example: UP National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) scam, where funds meant for improving healthcare in rural areas were misappropriated by top politicians & bureaucrats
- o **Impaired Human Rights:** Political corruption in public services can lead to a denial of basic human rights.
 - Eg: Mid-day meal scam, where funds meant for feeding school children were siphoned off, shows how corruption can directly impact the right to food and education.
- o **Disruption of Social Cohesion:** Corruption can corrode social cohesion by creating divisions between those who benefit from corrupt practices and those who suffer as a result.
 - Example: In highly corrupt societies, disparities between the corrupt elite and the marginalized can provoke social unrest, as in the Arab Spring.

Political Impacts :

- o **Undermining Democracy:** Corruption undermines the principles of democracy by allowing those with financial resources to exert disproportionate influence over the political process through bribes and campaign financing.
 - Example: The cash-for-votes scandal in the

Indian Parliament raised questions about the integrity of elected representatives and their susceptibility to corrupt influences.

Environmental cost :

- o Corrupt officials may grant permits to illegal environmental activities, such as poaching, illegal logging, or toxic waste dumping.
 - Example: Illegal rhino horn trade persists due to corruption among officials and dealers.

Economic impacts:

- o **Reduced economic growth:** Corruption promotes inefficiencies in utilisation of resources, distorts the markets, compromises quality which adversely affects the country's economic development.
- o **Reduced Foreign Investment:** Corruption increases the cost of doing business, discourages investment, and diverts public resources from productive sectors.

Ethical Impacts :

- o **Erosion of Public Trust :** Frequent corruption scandals reduce confidence in governments and public institutions, weakening democratic legitimacy.
 - Example: NEET paper leak protests.
- o **Social Norm :** Pervasive corruption can lead to the normalization of unethical behavior, where corruption becomes an accepted social norm, making it difficult to address

INDIA'S EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND COMBAT CORRUPTION

Regulatory Framework

- ✎ **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 :** Establishment of a body of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States to inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries including Prime Minister and other Union Ministers, Member of Parliament, and others.
- ✎ **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) :** Ensures transparency, fairness, objectivity, accountability, and responsiveness in public administration by supervising vigilance mechanisms.
- ✎ **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) :** Functions as the premier investigative agency for combating corruption and investigating major corruption cases in public life.
- ✎ **Directorate of Enforcement (ED) :** Investigates and prosecutes cases related to money laundering and financial crimes arising from corruption, in

coordination with the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).

Legislative Framework

- ✎ **Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018** Criminalises acceptance or attempted acceptance of undue advantage (bribe) by a public servant and prescribes punishment for corruption-related offences.
- ✎ **Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 :** Provides a legal framework to investigate allegations of corruption and misuse of power while protecting whistleblowers from victimisation.
- ✎ **Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 :** Enhances transparency and accountability by providing citizens with access to information held by public authorities.

MEASURES TAKEN GLOBALLY TO COMBAT CORRUPTION

* **United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) :**

The only legally binding global anti-corruption convention, promoting prevention, criminalisation, international cooperation, asset recovery, and technical assistance. India ratified UNCAC in 2011.

* **G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) :**

Promotes international cooperation, information sharing, asset recovery, and integrity in public institutions to strengthen anti-corruption efforts among G20 members.

WAY FORWARD

* **Strengthen Institutions:** Give the Lokpal and CVC independent staff, funding and investigative powers.
Example: Filling vacancies in the Lokpal and State Lokayuktas promptly.

* **Judicial & Police Reforms:** Establish special courts and trained investigation teams for corruption cases.

* **Ethical Governance:** Introduce ethics training, asset disclosure and conflict-of-interest rules.
Example: Mandatory annual declaration of assets by senior public officials.

* **Electoral & Political Reforms:** Ensure transparent political donations and strict

monitoring of election expenditure.
Example: Publishing details of political donors and contributions.

* **Leverage Technology:** Use digital payments, e-tendering and automated audits to reduce human discretion.
Example: Direct Benefit Transfer prevents diversion of welfare funds.

* **Citizen Participation & International Cooperation:** Promote social audits, grievance portals and cross-border information sharing.
Example: MGNREGA social audits expose fake beneficiaries, while UNCAC cooperation helps recover assets hidden abroad.

CONCLUSION

Corruption is not merely a legal issue but a governance challenge that undermines democracy, economic growth, and social justice. A combination of strong institutions, transparent governance, judicial accountability, technological innovation, and active citizen participation is essential to realise the vision of a corruption-free and Viksit Bharat by 2047.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Corruption has evolved from petty bribery to systemic institutional capture. Analyse its manifestations and suggest measures to strengthen accountability.
(15 marks) (250 words)

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT : YOUNG AND OLD

Syllabus: GS III - Environment

PYQ MAPPING

Q) 'Climate Change' is a global problem. How will India be affected by climate change? How Himalayan and coastal states of India are affected by climate change? (2017)

WHY IN NEWS

A recent 'HelpAge India' (an NGO) study highlighted that senior citizens are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change, calling for people-centred, age-inclusive climate resilience strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Climate justice is inseparable from social justice, as climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable age groups like children and the elderly, who contribute least to emissions but bear the greatest burden.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THE ELDERLY

Young Children	Youth	Elderly
• Impaired Cognitive Development : Heat stress and air pollution impair brain development, learning ability and memory. Example: High PM2.5 exposure linked to lower cognitive performance in children • Congenital Disorders in Children: Heat stress during pregnancy increases the risk of birth defects. Example: Increased incidence of neural tube defects in children due to maternal exposure to extreme heat during pregnancy • Disruption of Education : Extreme weather interrupts schooling and learning continuity. Example: Around 26,000 schools damaged in Pakistan in 2022 flood • Nutritional Insecurity : Climate change reduces food production, increasing malnutrition and stunting. Example: Drought and food insecurity in the greater Horn of Africa • Economic Vulnerability : Climate shocks deepen poverty, forcing child labour or school dropouts.	• Employment Insecurity : Climate-induced disasters disrupt livelihoods and shrink employment opportunities, especially in agriculture, tourism and MSMEs. Example: Kerala Floods in 2018 causing job losses among young workers • Cost of Living Burden : Food inflation and rising prices of essential commodities disproportionately affect young earners and students. Example: Heatwaves reduce crop yields, leading to spikes in vegetable and cereal prices. • Higher Cost of Entrepreneurship : Climate-resilient infrastructure, insurance and compliance increase the cost of starting and sustaining businesses. • Psychological Distress & Eco-anxiety : Uncertainty about careers, repeated disasters and climate anxiety affect mental well-being and productivity. Example : 2019-2020 Australian Black Summer bushfires caused severe physical destruction and triggered widespread psychological distress, anxiety, and depression among exposed youth	• Susceptibility to Vector-borne Diseases: Warmer temperatures increase mosquito-borne infections among elderly with weakened immunity Example: Rise in West Nile virus cases, with severe illness mainly in older adults in Italy (2023) • Social Stigma & Neglect : Older persons may be overlooked in disaster relief and rehabilitation. Example: Relief camps lacking age-friendly facilities. • Digital Exclusion : Difficulty accessing early-warning systems and digital relief services. Example: Inability to use app-based emergency alerts. • Social Isolation : Living alone and weak family support reduce adaptive capacity during climate disasters. Example: Elderly with their children abroad may have no one to assist during floods or heatwaves • Financial Insecurity : Fixed pensions and healthcare expenses reduce adaptive capacity. Example: Unable to afford air conditioning or climate-resilient housing

Example: Girls are dropping out of schools in cyclone hit Sunderbans villages	• Climate-induced Migration & Social Instability : Loss of livelihoods forces migration, leading to urban unemployment, informal work and weakened social cohesion. Example: Drought and desertification in Sahel region force youth migration, increasing unemployment and social conflict	• Mental Health & Emotional Distress : Loss of homes, displacement and bereavement lead to anxiety and depression. Example: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among elderly disaster survivors.
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GOVT INTERVENTIONS

 **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) :** India's flagship climate policy promoting sustainable development through climate adaptation, mitigation, clean technology and protection of vulnerable communities

 **National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change**

(NAFCC):

Provides financial support to climate adaptation projects in States and Union Territories highly vulnerable to climate change impacts

 **Adaptation and Resilience:** State-specific action plans and disaster management enhancements

WAY FORWARD

- * **Age-responsive Climate Policies :** Mainstream youth and elderly needs into climate adaptation and disaster management plans.
- * **Strengthen Social Protection :** Expand climate insurance, pensions, healthcare and livelihood support for vulnerable populations.
- * **Climate-resilient Healthcare :** Heat action plans, geriatric care, mental health services and disease

surveillance.

- * **Community-based Resilience :** Strengthen neighbourhood support networks, early warning systems and assisted evacuation for elderly.
- * **Youth-led Green Livelihoods :** Promote green jobs, climate entrepreneurship and skill development in renewable energy and resilient agriculture.

CONCLUSION

Addressing the disproportionate impact of climate change on children, youth and the elderly requires inclusive, age-responsive policies, advancing SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) to build a resilient and equitable society.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Climate change disproportionately affects children and the elderly due to their heightened vulnerability. Discuss the challenges in designing and implementing government interventions for these groups. Suggest measures to build age-inclusive climate resilience in the context of India's ageing population
(15 marks) (250 words)

RIGHT TO PROTEST AND LIMITS OF POLICE POWER

Syllabus: GS II - Polity & Governance

PYQ MAPPING

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

WHY IN NEWS

The use of tear gas and lathi charge during the July 20, 2026 “Chalo Sansad” protest at Jantar Mantar has revived concerns over excessive police force and the constitutional limits on regulating peaceful demonstrations.

INTRODUCTION

The right to protest is an essential feature of a democratic society, as it enables citizens to express dissent, demand accountability and participate in governance. However, this right must be balanced with public order, national security and the rights of other citizens. Therefore, police may regulate protests, but their actions must remain lawful, necessary, proportionate and accountable.

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS OF THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

Although the Constitution does not expressly mention a separate “right to protest”, it flows from several fundamental rights-

Article 19(1)(a): Freedom of speech and expression.

Article 19(1)(b): Right to assemble peacefully and without arms.

Article 19(1)(c): Right to form associations or unions.

Article 21: Protection of life and personal liberty,

including dignity and freedom from arbitrary State action.

Under Article 19(3): the State may impose reasonable restrictions on peaceful assembly in the interests of-

- o Sovereignty and integrity of India.
- o Public order.
- o Such restrictions must be lawful, necessary, proportionate and non-arbitrary.

LEGAL POWERS OF THE POLICE

Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 allows authorities to issue urgent preventive orders to avoid danger, public disorder or disturbance of public tranquillity.

The BNSS also permits an Executive Magistrate or authorised police officer to direct an unlawful assembly or an assembly likely to disturb public peace to disperse.

Under the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023**, an assembly of five or more persons becomes unlawful

only when its common objective includes criminal force, resistance to law, commission of an offence or coercion.

State laws such as the **Delhi Police Act, 1978** allow the police to regulate the route, timing, venue and conditions of public processions.

Prior permission should function as a regulatory mechanism and not as a tool to completely suppress democratic dissent.

WHEN CAN POLICE INTERVENE?

Police intervention may be justified when protesters become violent, damage public property, threaten lives, enter prohibited areas or refuse to obey a lawful dispersal order.

For example, Delhi Police stated that the protesters had permission to assemble at Jantar Mantar but not to march towards Parliament.

However, a minor violation of the permitted route does not automatically justify indiscriminate violence against the entire gathering.

Standards Governing the Use of Force

Police action must satisfy the following principles-

Legality: The action must be authorised by law and follow proper procedure.

Necessity: Force should be used only when persuasion, negotiation and warnings have failed.

Proportionality: The level of force must correspond to the actual threat posed by the protesters.

Minimum force: Only the least amount of force

necessary to restore public order should be used.

♣ **Accountability:** Police action should be recorded,

reviewed and independently investigated where serious injuries occur.

SUPREME COURT JUDGMENTS

♣ **Himat Lal K. Shah v. Commissioner of Police, 1973**

- o The Supreme Court held that the State may regulate public meetings but cannot impose arbitrary restrictions that destroy the right to assembly.

♣ **D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal, 1997**

- o The Court directed police personnel making arrests to wear clear and visible identification and name tags.

♣ **In Re: Ramlila Maidan Incident, 2012**

- o The Court criticised the midnight police action against sleeping protesters led by Baba Ramdev.
- o It held that peaceful protest is a constitutional right and that force must be used with restraint and only when strictly necessary.

♣ **Anita Thakur v. State of Jammu and Kashmir, 2016**

- o The Court held that excessive lathi charge violates fundamental rights.
- o Compensation was awarded to protesters injured due to disproportionate police action.

♣ **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. Union of India, 2018**

- o The Court held that demonstrations may be regulated to protect public order and the rights of residents.
- o However, authorities cannot completely extinguish the right to protest.

♣ **Amit Sahni v. Commissioner of Police, 2020**

- o In the Shaheen Bagh case, the Court recognised dissent as a constitutional right.
- o It also held that public roads and spaces cannot be occupied indefinitely, causing prolonged hardship to commuters.

IMPORTANCE OF THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

★ **Strengthens democratic accountability:** Protests compel governments to respond to public grievances.

- o **Example:** 2011 anti-corruption movement intensified the demand for a strong Lokpal mechanism.

★ **Gives voice to marginalised groups:** Protests enable weaker sections to raise concerns that may receive limited institutional attention.

- o **Example:** Narmada Bachao Andolan highlighted displacement and rehabilitation issues.

★ **Promotes policy reforms:** Public mobilisation can influence laws and government policies.

- o **Example:** protests after the 2012 Delhi gang rape

contributed to the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.

★ **Encourages participatory democracy:** Citizens can participate in governance beyond elections.

- o **Example:** The **Right to Information movement led by MKSS** contributed to the enactment of the RTI Act, 2005.

★ **Acts as an early-warning mechanism:** Peaceful demonstrations alert authorities to growing public dissatisfaction.

- o **Example:** Farmers' protests highlighted concerns regarding agricultural marketing and consultation with stakeholders.

MAJOR CONCERNS

▼ **Excessive use of force:** Police may use disproportionate force against largely peaceful gatherings; for example, the Supreme Court criticised the midnight police crackdown in the **Ramlila Maidan case, 2012**.

▼ **Misuse of prohibitory orders:** Restrictions may be imposed mechanically to prevent legitimate dissent; for example, repeated use of preventive orders around protest sites may effectively prevent peaceful assemblies.

▼ **Wide administrative discretion:** Authorities may selectively approve or reject protest venues and routes; for example, permission may be granted only

at distant designated sites where protesters receive little public visibility.

▼ **Weak police accountability:** Personnel without visible identification make responsibility difficult to establish; for example, unidentified officers involved in lathi charges may escape individual scrutiny.

▼ **Conflict with public rights:** Indefinite occupation of roads can affect commuters, businesses and emergency services; for example, the Supreme Court addressed this issue in the **Shaheen Bagh case, Amit Sahni v. Commissioner of Police, 2020**.

WAY FORWARD

- ✦ **Create a uniform protest-management framework:** Clear rules should regulate permissions, warnings, arrests and use of force
 - **Example:** standard operating procedures can specify when tear gas or lathi charge may be authorised.
- ✦ **Promote prior dialogue:** Police and organisers should mutually decide routes, timings and emergency access.
 - **Example:** authorities can designate separate lanes for protesters while keeping ambulance routes open.
- ✦ **Adopt a graduated response:** Police should first use dialogue, persuasion and warnings before force.
 - **Example:** trained negotiators can engage protest leaders before issuing a dispersal order.
- ✦ **Strengthen accountability:** Police should use visible identification, body cameras and independent inquiries
 - **Example:** video records can help determine whether force was proportionate.
- ✦ **Improve training and protest spaces:** Police need training in de-escalation, while protest sites must remain accessible and visible.
 - **Example:** designated spaces near administrative centres can protect public order without making dissent ineffective.

CONCLUSION

A democracy must protect both peaceful dissent and public order. Police action is legitimate only when it is lawful, necessary, proportionate and accountable, while protesters must remain peaceful and respect the rights of others.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) “The right to protest is fundamental, but it does not permit indefinite disruption. Similarly, the power to maintain public order does not authorise excessive police force.” Discuss with reference to constitutional provisions and Supreme Court judgments.
(15 marks) (250 words)

WEEKLY DOSSIERS

This week's dossier is about the Food Processing Industry in India, a vital link between agriculture and industry that drives value addition, farmer prosperity, employment generation, food security, and sustainable development. It explores the sector through three key dimensions: Agriculture and Farmer Income, Economy, Employment and Exports, and Nutrition, Food Security and Sustainability.

FOOD PROCESSING IN INDIA – AN ENGINE OF AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND FARMER PROSPERITY

Introduction

India is the world's second-largest producer of fruits and vegetables, the largest producer of milk, and among the leading producers of cereals, pulses, fish, and livestock. However, only a small proportion of agricultural produce undergoes value addition through processing. A robust food processing sector can bridge the gap between farm production and consumer demand while enhancing farmers' incomes and reducing post-harvest losses.

Importance of Food Processing

- ◆ **Increases value addition:** Processing converts low-value raw produce into higher-value products, such as **tomatoes into sauce, milk into cheese and potatoes into chips**; food processing already constitutes around **32% of India's food market**.
- ◆ **Reduces post-harvest losses:** Cold storage, packaging and processing prevent perishable produce from spoiling; the NABCONS study estimated losses of **6.02–15.05% in fruits** and **4.87–11.61% in vegetables**.
- ◆ **Generates employment:** Food processing creates jobs in grading, packaging, transportation, storage and marketing, accounting for **12.91% of employment in India's organised manufacturing sector**.
- ◆ **Diversifies farmers' income:** Farmers can earn through processing enterprises instead of depending only on crop sales; by December 2025, the **PMFME scheme had facilitated 1,72,707 loans** to micro food-processing units.
- ◆ **Promotes exports:** Products such as mango pulp, processed vegetables and cereal preparations improve India's export earnings; processed-food exports reached about **\$7.89 billion in 2024–25**.

Major Challenges

- ◆ **Inadequate cold chain:** India faces a cold-storage shortfall of nearly **10–15 million tonnes**.

- ◆ **Fragmented supply chains:** Multiple intermediaries and weak farm-to-market links increase delays and reduce farmers' returns.
- ◆ **Limited rural processing:** Nearly **25 lakh micro food-processing units** remain informal and largely unregistered.
- ◆ **Food-safety concerns:** Many State laboratories lack equipment to test pesticides, heavy metals and microbial contamination.
- ◆ **High logistics costs:** Poor rural roads, costly transport and rising freight charges reduce competitiveness.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Expand integrated cold chains:** Develop pre-cooling facilities, cold storage and refrigerated transport from farm to market.
- ◆ **Strengthen FPOs:** India's **10,000 registered FPOs** can aggregate produce and improve farmers' bargaining power.
- ◆ **Promote processing clusters:** Develop clusters near production centres, as under the **One District One Product** approach covering 726 districts.
- ◆ **Improve traceability:** Expand systems such as APEDA's **HortiNet** and **blockchain-enabled GrapeNet** for export certification.
- ◆ **Improve institutional credit:** PMFME provides a **35% credit-linked subsidy**, up to ₹10 lakh for individual units.

Conclusion

Food processing is not merely an industrial activity but a strategic tool for transforming Indian agriculture. Expanding value addition, strengthening rural infrastructure, and integrating farmers with markets can make the sector a key driver of inclusive economic growth and the vision of a developed India.

FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY – CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT AND EXPORTS

Introduction

The food processing industry is one of India's largest manufacturing sectors, linking agriculture with industry and services. It contributes significantly to GDP, employment generation, exports, and industrial development while supporting rural entrepreneurship.

Economic Significance

- ◆ **Creates value addition:** Processed food's share in India's agricultural exports increased to **20.4% in FY 2024–25**.
- ◆ **Generates employment:** Food processing provides around **12.91% of employment in organised manufacturing**, including substantial opportunities for women.
- ◆ **Promotes MSMEs:** Over **1.72 lakh micro food-processing enterprises** had been approved for assistance under PMFME by December 2025.
- ◆ **Attracts private investment:** The food-processing PLI scheme mobilised about **₹9,207 crore of investment** by December 2025.
- ◆ **Supports regional development:** Operation Greens identified **40 fruit and 97 vegetable clusters** across several States.

Challenges

- ◆ **Low processing levels:** The government continues to identify low processing, particularly in perishables, as a major structural challenge.
- ◆ **International quality standards:** Seafood exporters face high compliance costs and gaps in traceability and quality assurance.

- ◆ **Infrastructure gaps:** Inadequate cold storage, processing facilities and farm-to-market linkages increase wastage.
- ◆ **High transportation costs:** Weak first- and last-mile connectivity raises logistics costs, especially for rural processing units.
- ◆ **Climate disruptions:** Droughts, floods and heatwaves can reduce or delay the supply of agricultural raw materials.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Strengthen logistics:** Expand refrigerated transport and multimodal logistics parks; **35 locations** have been approved for such parks.
- ◆ **Promote startups:** Incubators such as **CFTRI's BioNEST** supported **26 food startups** by March 2026.
- ◆ **Improve quality testing:** Upgrade State laboratories with modern equipment and expand FSSAI- and NABL-recognised certification facilities.
- ◆ **Develop export clusters:** Create product-specific processing clusters with cold chains, traceability and links to ports and international markets.
- ◆ **Encourage innovation:** Support research in sustainable packaging, preservation and shelf-life extension; MoFPI provides R&D assistance covering up to **50–70% of equipment costs**.

Conclusion

A globally competitive food processing sector can transform India into a value-added agricultural economy. By combining infrastructure, innovation, skilled manpower, and policy support, India can emerge as a major global hub for processed food exports while creating millions of jobs.

FOOD PROCESSING IN INDIA – A PILLAR OF NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY

Introduction

Food processing plays a critical role in ensuring food security by reducing wastage, improving storage, extending shelf life, and making nutritious food available throughout the year. It also contributes to sustainable agriculture and efficient resource utilisation.

Contribution to Food Security

- ◆ Reduces post-harvest losses.

- ◆ Improves storage and preservation.
- ◆ Ensures year-round availability of food.
- ◆ Facilitates distribution during emergencies.
- ◆ Enhances affordability through efficient supply chains.

Contribution to Nutrition

- ◆ Food fortification with iron, folic acid, vitamin A, and vitamin D.

- ◆ Production of fortified rice and edible oils.
- ◆ Ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook nutritious foods.
- ◆ Better preservation of fruits, vegetables, dairy, and fish.

Challenges

- ◆ **Food waste:** Around **1.05 billion tonnes of food** are wasted globally each year, wasting water, energy and labour.
- ◆ **Plastic pollution:** Packaging accounts for nearly **36% of global plastic production**, much of which becomes single-use waste.
- ◆ **Energy-intensive processing:** Nearly **70% of agrifood-system energy use occurs after the farm gate** in processing, storage, packaging and transport.
- ◆ **Food-safety risks:** Adulteration remains a concern in products such as milk, edible oils and spices; FSSAI's DART programme provides over **50 rapid detection tests**.
- ◆ **Unequal nutritional access:** Nutritious foods remain unaffordable for many, while cheaper processed foods are often high in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Promote green processing:** Adopt energy-efficient drying, water recycling, waste-heat recovery and low-carbon refrigeration.
- ◆ **Expand food fortification:** Fortify staples such as rice, wheat flour, milk, edible oil and salt to tackle micronutrient deficiencies.
- ◆ **Use renewable energy:** Solar and bioenergy can power processing units, cold chains and refrigeration facilities.
- ◆ **Strengthen food safety:** Upgrade testing laboratories and expand **Food Safety on Wheels** for surveillance in remote areas.
- ◆ **Support sustainable packaging:** Promote reusable, recyclable and compostable packaging instead of difficult-to-recycle single-use materials.

Conclusion

Food processing is central to achieving food security, nutritional security, and sustainable development. By integrating technology, environmental responsibility, and inclusive policies, India can build a resilient food system that benefits farmers, consumers, and the economy alike.

BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

Madras High Court: Judges' Salary Details Not Exempt Under RTI Act

- ◆ The Madras High Court has held that the **pay scale and salary details of judges are not exempt from disclosure under Section 8 of the Right to Information Act, 2005**. The Court observed that judges' salaries are paid from the **Consolidated Fund of India**, making them a matter of public record, and citizens have the right to access such information. It further ruled that details relating to the composition, qualifications, functions, and responsibilities of the High Court's Party-in-Person Committee are administrative in nature and do not involve confidentiality.

Supreme Court Urges Awareness on Valid Driving Licences

- ◆ The Supreme Court has reiterated that an insurer is **not liable to indemnify** if a road accident is caused by a driver holding an **expired driving licence**, as the primary responsibility rests with the vehicle owner and driver to ensure the licence remains valid. While directing the insurer to first pay the compensation to the victims and recover the amount from the owner and driver, the Court urged the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** to conduct nationwide awareness campaigns on timely licence renewal, strengthen compliance, and simplify the issuance and renewal process.

Supreme Court Orders Timely Appointment of Disability Commissioners

- ◆ The Supreme Court has directed States and Union Territories to appoint **State Commissioners for Persons with Disabilities** under the **RPWD Act, 2016** within **four weeks**, warning that any delay will be viewed seriously. It also asked the Centre to appoint the **Chief Commissioner and two Additional Commissioners** and complete the pending

accessibility rules within **six months**.

Supreme Court Declines Plea to Regulate Reels and Podcasts

- ♦ The Supreme Court declined to entertain a writ petition seeking regulation of social media reels and podcasts over allegedly derogatory online content, holding that **Article 32 cannot be invoked to politicise issues or bypass established legal procedures**. The Court advised the petitioner to pursue remedies under the **criminal law** or approach the competent authority under the **Information Technology Rules, 2009**, reiterating that the Supreme Court should not be the first forum for such grievances.

Supreme Court Quashes 2021 Ex Post Facto Environmental Clearance Regime

- ♦ The Supreme Court has **prospectively quashed the 2021 Office Memorandum** permitting **ex post facto environmental clearances**, holding that the Centre cannot dilute the mandatory requirement of **prior environmental clearance** through an administrative order. The Court ruled that such changes must be made only through a valid statutory notification and that any future **amnesty scheme** must be limited to exceptional cases involving **supervening public interest**. However, to avoid disruption of ongoing projects, the Court allowed clearances granted under the **2017 notification** and the **2021 Office Memorandum** to remain valid unless specifically challenged in accordance with law.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are the District Collector of a tribal district where a multinational company has proposed setting up a lithium mining and battery manufacturing project. The project promises an investment of ₹12,000 crore and is expected to generate over 15,000 direct and indirect jobs, boosting the local economy and supporting India's clean energy transition. However, the proposed site falls within an ecologically sensitive area containing dense forests, wildlife habitats, and water sources that sustain several tribal villages. Environmental experts warn that the project may lead to deforestation, biodiversity loss, groundwater depletion, and displacement of indigenous communities. Local tribal groups have begun protesting, claiming that their livelihood, culture, and rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, will be adversely affected. The State Government is keen on early approval, citing economic growth and national strategic interests. Environmental groups demand cancellation of the project, while local youth largely support it because of the employment opportunities it offers.

As the District Collector, you are required to balance economic development, environmental protection, and social justice.

Questions

1. Identify the ethical issues and stakeholders involved in the case.
2. What are the competing values and dilemmas before you?
3. As the District Collector, what course of action would you adopt? Justify your decision using ethical principles and the concept of sustainable development.
4. Suggest institutional and policy measures that can ensure economic development without compromising environmental sustainability and the rights of local communities.

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Empathy:** Sheeja Sandra founded Snehasandram Charitable Trust in 2021 in Thiruvananthapuram after her daughter Sandra's disability led her to witness the financial hardship, abandonment, and isolation faced by mothers in hospital settings. The trust now supports over 200 mothers through livelihood programs.
2. **Courage of Conviction:** Students of Sarvodaya Inter College in Kishanpur, Fatehpur (Uttar Pradesh) protested peacefully for basic facilities like fans, furniture, and drinking water due to poor classroom conditions. The District Inspector of Schools (DIOS) responded with assurances, and improvements were initiated.
3. **Public Service Ethics:** In Maharashtra, nearly 79% of milk samples failed purity tests, prompting IAS officer Tukaram Mundhe, as FDA Commissioner, to launch a statewide crackdown on adulteration. Within 30 days, authorities conducted 360 raids, filed 235 FIRs, arrested 350 accused, and sealed 274 illegal units to ensure food safety.
4. **Environmental Ethics:** In Bengaluru, flooding despite dry lakes was traced to the loss and encroachment of Raja Kaluves (ancient stormwater channels that once connected lakes and directed rainwater flow). Using 1923 maps, Captain Santosh Kumar restored key channels and revived 14 lakes, reducing flooding and reestablishing natural drainage systems.
5. **Innovation:** JioVio Healthcare, founded in 2019 by Senthil Kumar Murugesan, uses AI and the wearable device "Allowear" to monitor high-risk pregnancies remotely in rural India, where only about 54% of women complete antenatal check-ups. Costing Re 1 per day, it has reached over 30 lakh mothers and supported 7,320 high-risk pregnancies.
6. **Social Responsibility:** Vivek Shangari, who rose from homelessness to building a successful tech career, has donated over 96% of his wealth and now supports 300 children's education through his Eklavya trust. He is also part of LivingMyPromise, a voluntary initiative where financially secure individuals pledge to donate at least 50% of their wealth for social causes.
7. **Environmental Ethics:** After a car accident at 46, Devaki Amma of Alappuzha, Kerala, began planting saplings and over four decades created 'Thapovanam', a five-acre forest with over 3,000 trees using organic methods. Her work in biodiversity conservation earned her the Padma Shri.

MODEL ESSAY

"War is merely the continuation of politics by other means"

Introduction

- Quote by Prussian strategist **Carl von Clausewitz, in *On War***
- In 1971, after failed diplomacy, India used a swift military campaign to achieve its political aim of securing its borders and creating Bangladesh.
- Highlights states use war as an instrument to achieve political objectives when diplomacy fails.

War as an Instrument of Politics

- **Geopolitical & Sovereign:** States use war to protect territorial integrity when diplomacy fails **Eg:** India in the **Kargil War, 1999** restored the Line of Control
- **Anti-Colonial:** Armed struggle emerges when political rights are denied **Eg:** **INA under Subhas Chandra Bose** challenged British rule).
- **Diplomatic & Coercive:** Military force is used to impose political and economic terms **Eg:** **Opium Wars** forced China to open trade.
- **Ideological & Proxy:** Superpowers fight indirectly through proxy wars **Eg:** **Vietnam War** reflected US-USSR rivalry
- **Administrative & Internal:** States use force to suppress insurgency and maintain control **Eg:** counter-insurgency in Kashmir/Northeast India
- **Unification:** Wars are used to build national unity **Eg:** Franco-Prussian War, 1870 unified Germany.

Limits of Clausewitz's Theory

- **Fog of War:** War becomes uncontrollable and escapes political intent **Eg:** **World War I** escalated into total destruction of empires).
- **Irrational Leadership:** Wars may reflect dictators' ego rather than rational policy

Eg: Hitler's invasion of USSR, 1941 led to Germany's collapse).

- **Ethnic Hatred:** Violence may aim at extermination, not political goals **Eg:** **Rwandan Genocide, 1994**
- **Religious Extremism:** Non-state actors may reject political negotiation **Eg:** **ISIS/AI-Qaeda** pursue ideological ends).
- **State Collapse:** In failed states, violence replaces politics (e.g., **Somalia civil war**).

Synthesis

- **Clausewitz's Trinity:** War operates through a balance of government policy (reason), military strategy (chance), and popular passion (emotion).
- **War as Political Tool:** While war continues politics, it is unstable due to battlefield uncertainty and mass emotions.
- **Need for Political Control:** If political objectives lose control, war turns into chaotic, self-destructive violence.

Conclusion

- War as politics demands that leaders be held accountable for the violence they authorize.
- **Balance of Will and Force** - Without political objectives war becomes mere brutality, while without military capacity a state risks subjugation

Sample Quotes

- *The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven- John Milton*
- *One man's imagined community is another man's political prison - Arjun Appadurai*
- *The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing - Blaise Pascal*

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS I: GEOGRAPHICAL PHENOMENA

Meghalaya's Water Paradox

- » Despite **11,000+ mm annual rainfall**, nearly **40% of Sohra's residents** face drinking water shortages in winter due to poor storage and rapid runoff.
- » **Climate change, deforestation, and limestone terrain** have reduced rainfall and groundwater recharge.
- » **Jal Jeevan Mission** coverage remains low (**43.57% in 2023**), exposing gaps in water infrastructure.
- » **Way forward-** Rainwater harvesting, watershed restoration, afforestation, better storage infrastructure, and community-based water management.



GS III: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The Wayanad rehabilitation experience highlights that **post-disaster recovery requires not only permanent housing but also resilient infrastructure, basic civic amenities, and sustainable livelihoods.**

- » **Infrastructure gaps:** Survivors continue to face **poor road connectivity, inadequate waste management, waterlogging, and limited public services**, affecting long-term rehabilitation.
- » **Livelihood restoration:** Relocated families, particularly those dependent on **agriculture and plantation work**, are struggling with **loss of livelihoods and higher living costs**, underscoring the need for livelihood-centric rehabilitation.
- » **Build Back Better:** The rehabilitation effort reinforces the **Sendai Framework's "Build Back Better"** principle by integrating disaster-resilient housing with climate-resilient infrastructure, connectivity, and community resilience.



GS III: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Regulatory clarity for AI in healthcare: CDSCO has issued guidance on regulating **AI-enabled and software-based medical devices** under the **Medical Devices Rules (MDR), 2017**, ensuring patient safety and regulatory certainty.

- » The guidance covers **Software as a Medical Device (SaMD)** and **AI/ML-based medical software** used for diagnosis, monitoring, prediction, or treatment, while excluding general wellness and fitness applications.
- » **Risk-based framework:** AI-based medical devices will be classified into **Classes A, B, C, and D** based on patient risk, with higher-risk devices subject to stricter regulatory scrutiny.
- » **Lifecycle regulation:** Manufacturers must ensure **clinical validation, cybersecurity, software updates, maintenance, and post-market surveillance**, promoting safety and reliability throughout the product lifecycle.



GS II: WELFARE SCHEMES

India's Abstention from ILO Convention No. 193 on Gig Workers

- » The first global labour treaty for **platform/gig workers**, guaranteeing minimum wages, timely payment, occupational safety, social security, and protection from unfair algorithmic management, irrespective of worker classification.
- » **India abstained:** While **406 countries/delegates voted in favour**, India's **government abstained** (though its employer and worker representatives supported it), citing the need for domestic legal alignment and federal considerations.
- » **Growing gig workforce:** India had **7.7 million gig workers (2020-21)**, projected to reach **23.5 million by 2029-30 (NITI Aayog)**, yet only **~15% have access to social security**, highlighting significant welfare gaps.



GS II: VULNERABLE SECTION

Child Trafficking

- » NCRB (2024) recorded **2,135 trafficking cases** involving **6,018 victims**, including **2,297 children**, though actual numbers are likely much higher.
- » The **BNSS** mandates reporting of trafficking, while Supreme Court judgments in **Pinki v. State of U.P.** and **Prajwala v. Union of India** emphasises speedy trials, victim compensation, rehabilitation, and reintegration.



GS II: EDUCATION

Rising student suicides: Student suicides increased by **~80%**, from **8,068 (2014)** to **14,488 (2024)**, with over **1.23 lakh** student suicides recorded between **2014–2024** (NCRB-ADSI).

- » **Examination-related stress:** More than **25,000 students** died by suicide due to **examination failure** between **2014–2024**, accounting for **over one-fifth (21%)** of all student suicides.
- » **High-stakes entrance examinations:** Exams like **NEET**, taken by **20 lakh+ aspirants annually**, have intensified concerns over extreme competition, paper leaks, repeated attempts, and psychological stress.



GS II: JUDICIARY

Limited impact of Fast-Track Courts (FTCs):

- » FTCs expedite disposal of **selected cases** but often **reallocate existing judges** instead of increasing judicial capacity, shifting pendency to other courts.
- » **Persistent backlog:** **Fast-Track Special Courts (FTSCs)** have a **pendency of nearly 2.45 lakh cases**, with disposal consistently lagging behind fresh case filings, highlighting structural constraints.
- » **Need for systemic reforms:** Speedy justice requires **more judges, prosecutors, forensic infrastructure, support staff, and better case management**, not merely the creation of special courts.



GS III: ENVIRONMENT

Massive wildfires in **France and Spain** displaced around **3.3 lakh people**, highlighting the increasing frequency and intensity of climate-induced disasters.

- » **Climate change link:** **Europe is the world's fastest-warming continent**, warming at **more than twice the global average** (Copernicus), with extreme heat and prolonged drought intensifying wildfire risks.
- » **Extreme fire behaviour:** The Gironde wildfire generated France's first recorded **pyrocumulonimbus cloud** (fire-induced thunderstorm), demonstrating how extreme wildfires can create their own weather systems.

The **Tigers Outside Tiger Reserves (TOTR)** initiative aims to conserve tigers in **human-dominated landscapes** while ensuring the safety of local communities through a **science-based, landscape approach**.

- » **Need for TOTR:** With **35–40% of India's tigers now living outside Tiger Reserves (NTCA)**, conservation efforts must extend beyond protected areas to address increasing human–tiger interactions.
- » **Two-pronged strategy:** TOTR focuses on **reducing human–tiger conflict** through technology, rapid response teams, and rescue infrastructure, while promoting **long-term coexistence** through community participation, awareness, and timely compensation.



GS II: SOCIAL JUSTICE

According to UDISE+ 2025–26 reports only **21.66 lakh** Children with Special Needs (CWSN) enrolled in schools, while NFHS-5-based estimates indicate around **98.8 lakh** CWSN, suggesting only **~22%** are enrolled.

- » **High dropout rates:** CWSN enrolment declines sharply at higher levels of education, with only **48%** progressing from upper primary to secondary and **46%** from secondary to higher secondary.
- » **Gender disparity:** Girls account for only **43%** of CWSN enrolled in schools, highlighting persistent gender gaps in inclusive education.

CHERRY PICKS OF THE WEEK

ALLOGRAPHA

- It is a genus of **script lichens** in the **Graphidaceae** family. It is a symbiotic association between a fungus and algae and/or cyanobacteria, and serves as an important **bioindicator** of forest health and environmental quality due to its sensitivity to pollution.

GENERIC DRUGS

- They are **bioequivalent to branded medicines** in safety, quality, efficacy, and intended use, but are sold at lower prices due to reduced R&D and marketing costs. The **Indian Patents Act, 1970** permits **compulsory licensing** in public interest. India is the **largest supplier of generic medicines**, accounting for **about 20% of global supply**.

BOROPHENE

- It is a **single-atom-thick, two-dimensional (2D) allotrope of boron**, similar to graphene. It is an ultra-

light, high-strength nanomaterial with excellent electrical and thermal conductivity, flexibility, and a large surface area. Its applications include **batteries, supercapacitors, fuel cells, sensors, electronics, catalysis, and advanced lubricants**.

BIOFOULING

- It is the accumulation of microorganisms, plants, animals, and other aquatic organisms on surfaces submerged in water. It can harbour pathogens and facilitate the spread of **non-native (invasive) species** to new environments.

ZINC-AIR BATTERIES

- They are rechargeable **metal-air batteries** that use **zinc as the anode** and **oxygen from air as the cathode reactant**. They offer **high energy density, low cost, and eco-friendliness**, making them suitable for **energy storage and electric mobility**, though challenges include **zinc corrosion and slow oxygen reactions**.