

FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> DEFENCE DECADE (2014–2026)

> INDIA'S SPACE ODYSSEY

> TELEGRAM BAN

15th JUNE, 2026 - 21st JUNE, 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

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INDIA'S SPACE ODYSSEY

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) India has achieved remarkable successes in unmanned space missions including the Chandrayaan and Mars Orbiter Mission, but has not ventured into manned space mission. What are the main obstacles to launching a manned space mission, both in terms of technology and logistics? Examine critically. **(2017)**

Q) Discuss India's achievements in the field of Space Science and Technology. How the application of this technology has helped India in its socio-economic development? **(2016)**

WHY IN NEWS

The PIB has released a backgrounder titled *"India's Space Odyssey- Building India's Space Future"*, outlining India's strategic push to expand its space capabilities and ambitious future missions.

INTRODUCTION

Space has become a key driver of national development, security and technological self-reliance. From ISRO's establishment in 1969 to missions like Chandrayaan-3 and Gaganyaan, India has emerged as a leading global space power. Today, its space programme serves as a catalyst for sustainable development, strategic autonomy and global leadership.

EVOLUTION OF INDIA'S SPACE PROGRAMS

→ Foundations of India's Space Programme:

- o **INCOSPAR (1962):** Established under the leadership of **Vikram Sarabhai**, it laid the foundation for India's organised space programme and establishment of ISRO.
- o **ISRO (1969):** Replaced INCOSPAR and became India's **nodal agency for space research**, satellite development, launch vehicles, and space applications.

→ Landmark Space Missions:

- o **Aryabhata:** India's first satellite, launched 1975 by the Soviet Union that laid the foundation for indigenous satellite development.
- o **Chandrayaan 1:** India's first lunar mission, launched on 22 October 2008 that discovered water molecules on the Moon.
- o **Chandrayaan 2:** Launched in 2019, it placed a highly successful orbiter around the Moon providing high-resolution data on the lunar surface.
- o **Chandrayaan 3:** Launched in 2023, it made India the first country to soft-land near the Moon's south pole and the fourth to achieve a successful lunar landing.
- o **Mars Orbiter Mission (2013):** Made India the first nation to reach Mars on its maiden attempt and the fourth to place a spacecraft in Martian orbit.
- o **Aditya-L1:** India's first solar mission, launched in

2023 to study the Sun from the L1 Lagrange Point.

- o **XPoSat (2024):** India's first dedicated X-ray polarimetry mission to study black holes, neutron stars and other celestial X-ray sources.

→ Advancements in Space Science:

- o **AstroSat (2015):** India's first multi-wavelength space observatory to study stars, galaxies and other celestial objects.
- o **SpaDeX mission (2024):** India's first space docking mission, demonstrating autonomous docking and undocking capabilities in orbit.
- o **Bharatiya Docking System:** An indigenously developed docking technology enabling spacecraft docking for future missions like Gaganyaan, the Bharatiya Antariksh Station and Chandrayaan-4.

→ Deep Space Vision :

Many planned missions have signified India's transition from planetary exploration to sustained deep-space capability.

- o **Chandrayaan-4:** India's first lunar sample-return mission, aimed at collecting and bringing Moon samples back to Earth.
- o **LUPEX:** A joint ISRO-JAXA mission to explore water ice and volatile resources near the Moon's south pole.
- o **Venus Orbiter Mission:** India's first mission to Venus, aimed at studying the planet's atmosphere, geology and surface processes.

INDIGENOUS CAPABILITIES

- 🇮🇳 **Self-Reliant Launch Vehicle Ecosystem**: Indigenous launch vehicles have strengthened India's self-reliance in satellite launches and space transportation.
 - **PSLV**: India's **workhorse launch vehicle**, primarily used to launch Earth observation satellites into **Polar Sun-Synchronous Orbits (SSO)**.
 - **GSLV**: Designed to launch **heavier communication satellites** into **Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit** using indigenous cryogenic technology.
 - **LVM3**: India's **heaviest operational launch vehicle**, capable of launching heavy satellites and serving as the **launch vehicle for Gaganyaan**.
 - **SSLV**: A **cost-effective, quick-response launch vehicle** developed for launching **small satellites** into low-Earth orbit.
- 🔍 **Advanced Propulsion Technologies**: Progress in **cryogenic, semi-cryogenic, electric propulsion, reusable launch vehicle** technologies and autonomous landing systems has strengthened indigenous capabilities.
- 👤 **Human Spaceflight Ecosystem**: India has strengthened its human spaceflight capabilities through various programmes.
 - **Gaganyaan**: India's **first indigenous human spaceflight mission**, aimed at sending astronauts into low-Earth orbit.
 - **Axiom-4 Participation (2025)**: Enabled **Shubhanshu Shukla** to gain hands-on experience in **human spaceflight and microgravity research** aboard the International Space Station.
- 🇮🇳 **Indigenous Space Technology Stack**: India has advanced its indigenous space technologies through programmes that have reduced technological dependence.
 - **NavIC**: India's **indigenous satellite navigation system**, providing accurate positioning and navigation services over India and surrounding regions.
 - **VIKRAM3201**: India's **first indigenously developed 32-bit space-grade microprocessor**, designed for high-reliability space missions.
 - **KALPANA32**: An **indigenous 32-bit processor** developed for **fault-tolerant onboard computing** in satellites and other space applications.
- 🇮🇳 **Commercialisation of the Space Sector**: Establishment of various technology transfer initiatives and PPP models have transformed India's space economy.
 - **NSIL**, ISRO's **commercial arm**, established to commercialise space technologies, launch services and satellite-based applications.
 - **IN-SPACE**: An **autonomous regulatory and promotional agency** that facilitates and authorises private sector participation in India's space sector.
- 🇮🇳 **Rise of Private Sector and Start-ups**: Space start-ups have grown from **one in 2014 to over 400 by 2026**, supported by liberalised FDI, venture funds and technology adoption schemes.
- 🇮🇳 **Expanding Space Infrastructure**: **Kulasekarapattinam Spaceport** is India's **second spaceport**, being developed to support **SSLV** missions and increase the country's launch capacity.

SPACE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ♣️ **Agriculture and Food Security**: Satellite-based **crop monitoring, yield estimation, drought assessment and precision agriculture** improve food security and farmer welfare.
 - **Example**: FASAL (Forecasting Agricultural Output using Space, Agrometeorology and Land-based Observations)
- ♣️ **Disaster Management and Climate Resilience**: Earth observation satellites enable **cyclone tracking, flood forecasting, forest fire monitoring, landslide assessment** and early warning systems.
- ♣️ **Water Resource Management**: India has strengthened water resource management through **hydro-informatics and geospatial technologies**.
 - **India-WRIS** is a web-based **GIS platform** developed by **ISRO** and the **CWC** to provide integrated data for **water resource planning** and management
- ♣️ **Healthcare and Education**: Telemedicine services in remote regions and satellite-based educational broadcasting improve access to essential services.
 - **PM e-VIDYA** delivers **multimodal learning** through TV channels, online platforms and digital content



- ♣ **Governance and Digital India:** Many geospatial platforms have been developed to support urban planning and evidence-based governance.
- **Bhuvan:** ISRO's **indigenous geoportal** providing satellite imagery, thematic maps and geospatial services for governance, planning and disaster management.
- **Bhoonidhi:** ISRO's **Earth observation data portal**, providing access to archived and near real-time satellite imagery for research and public use.
- ♣ **Livelihoods and Coastal Economy :** Potential **Fishing Zone advisories and Distress Alert Transmitters** enhance fishermen's incomes while improving maritime safety.

GLOBAL SPACE FOOTPRINT

- 🔗 **Trusted International Space Partner:** India has signed over **300 space cooperation agreements** with **61 countries** and multiple international organisations.
- 🔗 **Global Scientific Collaborations :**
 - **Centre National d'Études Spatiales (CNES):** France's national space agency, partnering with ISRO on the **TRISHNA** mission for high-resolution thermal Earth observation.
 - **Roscosmos:** Russia's national space agency, supporting India's **Gaganyaan** programme through astronaut training and human spaceflight technologies.
- 🔗 **Commercial Launch Services:** ISRO has launched nearly **400 foreign satellites after 2014**, enhancing India's reputation as a reliable launch service provider.
- 🔗 **Space Diplomacy :**
 - **South Asia Satellite (GSAT-9):** A communication satellite launched by India in **2017** to provide **telecommunication, telemedicine, tele-education and disaster management services** to neighbouring South Asian countries.
 - **BIMSTEC Space Programme:** An Indian initiative

to strengthen **regional cooperation in satellite applications** among BIMSTEC member states.



- **Saudi Arabia:** India and Saudi Arabia cooperate in **satellite development, launch services and space technology applications** through an MoU signed in **2024**.
- **African nations:** ISRO has signed cooperation agreements with countries such as **Nigeria, Kenya and Mauritius** for **satellite applications, capacity building and Earth observation**.
- 🔗 **Responsible Global Space Leadership:** India promotes **peaceful use** of outer space, climate monitoring, disaster management, knowledge sharing and sustainable global space governance.

CHALLENGES

- ▼ **Limited Financial Resources :** India's space budget remains modest compared to major space powers like the USA and China, constraining long-term ambitions.
- ▼ **Dependence on Critical Technologies :** Continued reliance on imported semiconductor components, specialised electronics and advanced materials affects technological sovereignty.
- ▼ **Growing Global Competition:** Rapid advancements by China, the USA and private companies such as **SpaceX** intensify competition in launch services and satellite markets.
- ▼ **Space Debris and Sustainability :** Increasing congestion in Earth's orbit poses operational risks and demands stronger debris mitigation measures.
- ▼ **Security and Militarisation of Space :** Anti-satellite weapons, cyber threats and weaponisation of space require stronger space security capabilities.
- ▼ **Regulatory and Commercial Challenges :** A comprehensive national space law, predictable regulatory framework and stronger private investment ecosystem are still evolving.

WAY FORWARD

- * **Strengthen Indigenous Manufacturing:** Build domestic capabilities in semiconductors, advanced electronics, propulsion systems and space-grade materials.
- * **Deepen Public–Private Partnerships:** Expand the role of start-ups, MSMEs, academia and industry across the entire space value chain.
- * **Increase Investment in Research and Innovation:** Promote AI, quantum technologies, reusable launch vehicles, robotics and next-generation satellite technologies.
- * **Expand International Cooperation:** Leverage strategic partnerships for joint missions, technology development, capacity building and global scientific leadership while safeguarding strategic autonomy.

CONCLUSION

India's space programme has evolved into a cornerstone of scientific progress, strategic capability and national development. As India advances towards the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**, its space sector will remain a key driver of sustainable growth, technological leadership and global influence.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Recent advances in India's space sector reflect a transition from application-driven missions to sustained space capabilities. Discuss the major achievements of India's space programme and the challenges that must be addressed.

(10 marks) (150 words)

THE DEFENCE DECADE (2014–2026)

Syllabus: GS III - Defence

PYQ MAPPING

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

WHY IN NEWS

The Government of India, through a PIB Backgrounder (June 2026), highlighted India's defence transformation over the last decade, showcasing significant progress in military capability, indigenous defence production, exports, innovation, and defence diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

India's defence sector has undergone a paradigm shift from being one of the world's largest defence importers to an emerging defence manufacturing and export hub. Guided by the vision of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and **Make in India**, the period 2014–2026 witnessed major reforms in procurement, research, industrial capacity, and strategic partnerships.

DEFENCE TRANSFORMATION AT A GLANCE

Indicator	2013-14/2014-15	2025-26/2026-27
Defence Budget	₹2.53 lakh crore	₹7.85 lakh crore
Capital Outlay	₹94,588 crore	₹2.19 lakh crore
Defence Production	₹46,429 crore	₹1.78 lakh crore
Defence Exports	₹686 crore	₹38,424 crore
R&D Allocation	₹13,716 crore	₹29,100 crore
Countries Importing Indian Defence Products	Limited	80+ countries

INDIA'S DEFENCE DECADE (2014–2026): KEY HIGHLIGHTS

→ Enhanced Defence Capability:

- Defence budget increased from **₹2.53 lakh crore to ₹7.85 lakh crore**, while capital expenditure rose from **₹94,588 crore to ₹2.19 lakh crore**, boosting military modernisation.
- Indigenous platforms such as **Tejas Mk-1A, Prachand, Arjun Mk-1A, Akash and BrahMos** strengthened operational readiness and reduced import dependence.
- Strategic capabilities expanded through **Mission Shakti (ASAT)** and **Mission Divyastra (MIRV)**, enhancing deterrence.
- Adoption of **AI technologies, hypersonic research and scramjet testing** prepared India for future warfare.

→ Defence Innovation Ecosystem:

- Defence R&D allocation more than doubled to **₹29,100 crore**, with 25% opened to industry and academia.
- IDEX** fostered defence innovation by engaging **676 startups/MSMEs** and awarding **551 contracts**.
- Technology Development Fund (TDF)** promoted indigenous deep-tech solutions through financial

support.

- DRDO's academia-industry partnerships accelerated research-to-application outcomes.

→ Procurement Reforms for Self-Reliance:

- Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020** prioritised indigenous procurement and higher domestic content.
- Defence Procurement Manual 2025** streamlined procurement and improved efficiency.
- Positive Indigenisation Lists** covering over **5,000 items** reduced import dependence.

→ Capacity Transformation:

- Defence production increased from **₹46,429 crore to ₹1.78 lakh crore**, reflecting growing manufacturing strength.
- Defence Industrial Corridors in **UP and Tamil Nadu** attracted major investments.

→ Export Transformation:

- Defence exports surged from **₹686 crore to ₹38,424 crore**, reaching **80+ countries**.
- Growing global acceptance of Indian defence products strengthened India's credibility.

- o Defence exports emerged as an important instrument of strategic diplomacy.

➔ **Human Capital Development:**

- o **Agnipath Scheme** created a younger, technology-oriented military force.
- o Apprenticeships, internships and skill-development initiatives strengthened defence manpower.

➔ **Defence Diplomacy:**

- o Defence partnerships with the **US, France, Russia, Japan, Australia and UAE** deepened technology and security cooperation.
- o Active engagement in **QUAD, SCO, ASEAN and Indo-Pacific initiatives** enhanced India's strategic influence.
- o Through **SAGAR and MAHASAGAR**, India emerged as a credible security provider in the Indian Ocean Region.

CHALLENGES

- ✧ **Dependence on Critical Technologies:** India continues to rely on imports for aero-engines, advanced semiconductors, and propulsion systems.

- o **Example:** The **Tejas fighter aircraft** still uses the US-made **GE engine**.

- ✧ **Insufficient Private Sector Participation:** Defence production remains largely dominated by DPSUs despite growing private-sector involvement.

- o **Example:** DPSUs account for nearly **76% of defence production**, while the private sector contributes about 24%.

- ✧ **Low Defence R&D Intensity:** Indigenous development of frontier technologies remains constrained by limited R&D investments.

- o **Example:** India is yet to develop an operational indigenous jet engine under the **Kaveri Engine Project**.

- ✧ **Global Competition in Defence Exports:** Indian products face stiff competition from established exporters such as the US, France, Russia, and China.

- o **Example:** India competes with **French Rafale** and **US F-16/F-35 platforms** in global fighter aircraft markets.

- ✧ **Supply Chain and Skill Gaps:** Dependence on imported components and shortage of specialised talent affect capability development.

- o **Example:** Global semiconductor disruptions during the **COVID-19 period** impacted defence and electronics production worldwide.

WAY FORWARD

- ✧ **Achieve Technological Sovereignty** through mission-mode development of critical technologies.

- o **Example:** DRDO's **GTRE programme** and the proposed **India-France engine collaboration** can reduce dependence on foreign engines.

- ✧ **Deepen Private Sector Participation** through greater procurement and co-development opportunities.

- o **Example:** The **Tata-Airbus C295 aircraft project** demonstrates successful private-sector involvement in defence manufacturing.

- ✧ **Increase Defence R&D Investment** and strengthen industry-academia collaboration.

- o **Example:** **iDEX** and **Technology Development**

Fund (TDF) have supported hundreds of defence startups and innovators.

- ✧ **Expand Defence Export Markets** through strategic partnerships and defence diplomacy.

- o **Example:** Export of **BrahMos missiles to the Philippines** showcases India's growing defence export capability.

- ✧ **Develop Resilient Supply Chains and Skilled Workforce** for emerging technologies.

- o **Example:** The **Semicon India Programme** and DRDO's **Industry-Academia Centres of Excellence** can strengthen domestic capabilities in advanced technologies.

CONCLUSION

India's defence transformation from 2014 to 2026 represents a shift from **import dependence to strategic self-reliance**. Through procurement reforms, indigenous innovation, industrial expansion, operational modernisation, and proactive defence diplomacy, India has strengthened its **capability, capacity, and credibility**. As the country moves toward **Viksit Bharat 2047**, a technologically advanced, export-oriented, and self-reliant defence ecosystem will be central to India's aspiration of becoming a leading global power.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the role of Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiatives in transforming India from a major defence importer into an emerging defence manufacturing and export hub **(15 marks) (250 words)**

FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACT, 1951

Syllabus: GS II - Indian Polity

PYQ MAPPING

Q) "Parliament's power to amend the Constitution is a limited power and it cannot be enlarged into absolute power." In the light of this statement explain whether Parliament under Article 368 of the Constitution can destroy the Basic Structure of the Constitution by expanding its amending power? (2019)

WHY IN NEWS

The year 2026 marks 75 years of the First Constitutional Amendment Act, 1951, often regarded as one of the most consequential amendments in India's constitutional history. It fundamentally altered the balance between Fundamental Rights, Judicial Review, and State-led Social Transformation.

INTRODUCTION

The **First Constitutional Amendment Act, 1951**, introduced by Jawaharlal Nehru's government, was the first major amendment to the Constitution. It sought to overcome judicial obstacles to land reforms, reservation policies, and state regulation, thereby redefining the balance between **Fundamental Rights, Judicial Review, and socio-economic transformation**.

BACKGROUND TO THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACT, 1951

- ➔ Soon after the Constitution came into force in 1950, several judicial decisions challenged key policies of the Nehru government, creating tensions between **Fundamental Rights and socio-economic reforms**.
- ➔ In **Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras (1950)** and **Brij Bhushan v. State of Delhi (1950)**, the Supreme Court struck down government restrictions on the magazines *Cross Roads* and *Organiser*, limiting the state's ability to regulate speech and maintain public order.
- ➔ In **State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan (1951)**, the Supreme Court invalidated caste-based reservations in educational institutions, holding that such provisions violated the Right to Equality under Article 15.
- ➔ In land reform cases such as **Kameshwar Singh v. State of Bihar**, courts questioned the constitutional validity of Zamindari abolition laws, threatening the government's agrarian reform agenda.
- ➔ These judgments convinced the government that certain Fundamental Rights provisions were obstructing its objectives of **social justice, land reforms, and nation-building**, leading to the enactment of the **First Constitutional Amendment Act, 1951**.

Thus, the First Amendment was introduced to protect land reforms, enable affirmative action for backward classes, and expand the scope of reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech while strengthening the state's capacity to pursue socio-economic transformation.

KEY FEATURES OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT

- 🔍 **Expanded Restrictions on Freedom of Speech:**
 - Article 19(2) was amended to include additional grounds such as **public order, friendly relations with foreign states, incitement to an offence, and security of the state**.
 - This provided constitutional backing for government regulation of speech and public order laws.
- 🔍 **Enabled Reservation for Backward Classes:**
 - Article 15(4) was inserted to permit special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes, SCs and STs.
 - It overturned the effect of the Champakam Dorairajan judgment and became the constitutional basis of India's reservation policy.
- 🔍 **Protected Land Reforms:**
 - Articles 31A and 31B were introduced to safeguard agrarian reform laws from judicial challenges.
 - **Substantiation-** This facilitated abolition of the Zamindari system and redistribution of land.
- 🔍 **Created the Ninth Schedule:**
 - Laws placed in the Ninth Schedule were protected from judicial review.
 - Initially intended to protect land reform laws, it later expanded to include several other legislations.
- 🔍 **Facilitated State-Led Economic Development:**
 - Amendments to Article 19(6) enabled state monopolies and nationalisation policies.
 - This supported India's mixed-economy model and expansion of the public sector.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT

☀ Accelerated Agrarian Reforms:

- o The amendment enabled states to abolish Zamindari and implement land reforms without constant judicial intervention.
- o **Example:** Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh successfully implemented land reform programmes.

☀ Strengthened Social Justice Measures:

- o It provided constitutional legitimacy to affirmative action policies.
- o **Example:** Later reservation policies for OBCs were built upon Article 15(4).

☀ Promoted Welfare-State Objectives:

- o The amendment prioritised socio-economic transformation and Directive Principles over rigid

interpretation of rights.

- o **Example:** It enabled governments to undertake redistributive policies for weaker sections.

☀ Expanded Governmental Authority:

- o The state gained greater powers to maintain public order and implement policy reforms.
- o **Example:** Governments could impose restrictions on speech in situations affecting public order.

☀ Facilitated Nation-Building in the Early Years:

- o The amendment addressed challenges faced by a newly independent nation pursuing rapid social and economic change.
- o **Example:** Land reforms were considered essential for dismantling feudal structures.

CRITICISMS OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT

- **Curtailment of Freedom of Speech:** The amendment broadened the scope for state restrictions on expression.

- o **Example:** Critics argue it laid the constitutional foundation for laws such as sedition and preventive detention.

- **Weakening of Judicial Review:** The Ninth Schedule reduced judicial oversight over legislation.

- o **Example:** Several controversial laws were later protected from constitutional scrutiny.

- **Erosion of Liberal Constitutionalism:** The amendment shifted the balance in favour of state power over individual liberty.

- o **Example:** Critics view it as a departure from the liberal spirit of the original Constitution.

- **Created a Precedent for Overriding Judicial Decisions:** Parliament amended the Constitution to overcome unfavourable court rulings.

- o **Example:** This pattern reappeared in later constitutional amendments.

LONG-TERM CONSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

- 🌀 **Triggered Parliament-Judiciary Tensions:** The amendment initiated a long-standing debate over constitutional supremacy.

- o **Example:** This conflict eventually led to the **Kesavananda Bharati judgment (1973)** and the Basic Structure Doctrine.

- 🌀 **Shaped Modern Reservation Policy:** Article 15(4) remains the foundation of affirmative action in India.

- o **Example:** Reservation policies for OBCs, SCs and STs derive legitimacy from this provision.

- 🌀 **Influenced Free Speech Debates:** Contemporary

discussions on censorship, sedition, and digital regulation often relate back to Article 19(2).

- o **Example:** Debates on online content regulation reflect the same tension between liberty and public order.

🌀 Redefined Constitutional Governance:

- o It established the principle that Fundamental Rights may be balanced against broader social objectives.
- o **Example:** Courts continue to balance individual rights against public interest.

CONCLUSION

The First Constitutional Amendment Act, 1951 was both a **vehicle of social transformation and a source of constitutional controversy**. While it enabled land reforms, reservations, and welfare-state objectives, it also expanded state power and narrowed certain civil liberties. Its enduring legacy lies in shaping India's constitutional discourse on **liberty, equality, social justice, and the limits of governmental authority**.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the circumstances that led to the enactment of the First Constitutional Amendment Act, 1951. How did it alter the balance between individual liberty and state power? (250 Words)
(15 marks) (250 words)

TELEGRAM BAN AND SCOPE OF SECTION 69A OF THE IT ACT

Syllabus: GS II - Government policies and intervention

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Use of Internet and social media by non-state actors for subversive activities is a major concern. How have these been misused in the recent past? Suggest effective guidelines to curb the above threat. (2016)

WHY IN NEWS

- The **Delhi High Court** upheld the Central Government's temporary blocking of **Telegram** under **Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000**.
- The ban was imposed after allegations that organised cheating networks used Telegram to circulate manipulated information and facilitate fraud related to the **NEET-UG 2026 re-examination**.

INTRODUCTION

The Delhi High Court's decision to uphold the temporary ban on Telegram has brought **Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000** into focus. The judgment expands the scope of the provision by recognising the government's power to block an entire digital platform in exceptional circumstances. It raises important questions regarding the balance between **public order, digital governance, and freedom of expression**.

ABOUT SECTION 69A OF THE IT ACT, 2000

➔ Power to Block Online Content:

- Section 69A empowers the Central Government or its authorised officers to direct intermediaries and government agencies to block public access to digital information.
- It serves as the principal legal mechanism for regulating harmful online content.

➔ Limited Grounds for Blocking:

- Blocking orders can be issued only on specified grounds-
 - Sovereignty and integrity of India
 - Security of the State
 - Defence of India
 - Friendly relations with foreign States
 - Public order
 - Prevention of incitement to cognisable offences

➔ Procedural Safeguards:

- The Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009 prescribe a structured process.
- Blocking requests are examined by an inter-ministerial committee before implementation, except in emergency situations.

➔ Judicial Validation:

- In *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)*, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of Section 69A.
- The Court described it as a "narrowly drawn provision with adequate procedural safeguards."

➔ Previous Applications:

- Section 69A was used to ban 59 Chinese applications in 2020, including TikTok, ShareIt, and UC Browser.
- The Telegram case represents one of the most significant platform-level blocking actions after the Chinese app ban.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACT, 2000

☀ Legal Recognition of Digital Transactions:

- The Act provides legal validity to electronic records and digital signatures.
- It facilitated the growth of e-governance, e-commerce, and digital financial transactions.

☀ Safe Harbour Protection for Intermediaries:

- Section 79 grants intermediaries conditional immunity from liability for third-party content.

- Example:** Social media platforms are generally not liable for user-generated content if they comply with due diligence requirements.

☀ Framework for Cybercrime Regulation:

- The Act criminalises hacking, identity theft, cyber fraud, source code tampering, and unauthorised access to computer systems.
- It forms the backbone of India's cybercrime

regulatory framework.

☀ **Data Protection and Privacy Safeguards:**

- o It provides legal remedies against unauthorised disclosure and misuse of personal information. Supports cybersecurity and data governance efforts.

☀ **Institutional Mechanism for Dispute Resolution:**

- o The Act created specialised adjudicatory mechanisms for cyber disputes and digital offences. It strengthened legal enforcement in the digital ecosystem.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DELHI HIGH COURT JUDGMENT

♣ **Broad Interpretation of Section 69A:**

- o The Court held that software applications and platforms constitute "information" under the IT Act.
- o This allows blocking of an entire platform where circumstances justify such action.

♣ **Reinforcement of the Proportionality Principle:**

- o The Court accepted that targeted content removals had failed because offenders repeatedly created mirror channels and backup groups.
- o Therefore, a temporary platform-wide block was

considered proportionate.

♣ **Protection of Examination Integrity:**

- o The judgment recognised examination security as a legitimate public interest objective.
- o It prioritised protection of lakhs of students affected by examination fraud.

♣ **Strengthening Government's Regulatory Capacity:**

- o The ruling provides authorities with greater flexibility to address organised digital criminal networks.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

▼ **Proportionality Concerns:**

- o The blocking order affected nearly 150 million legitimate Telegram users in India.
- o A platform-wide restriction may impact citizens who have no connection with unlawful activities.

▼ **Freedom of Speech and Expression:**

- o Telegram is widely used for communication, education, business, and information dissemination.
- o Restrictions may indirectly affect Article 19(1)(a) rights.

▼ **Enforcement Limitations:**

- o Section 69A orders depend on implementation by

Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

- o VPN services can often bypass blocking measures, reducing their practical effectiveness.

▼ **Transparency Deficit:**

- o Blocking orders are generally confidential. Lack of public disclosure limits accountability and informed public debate.

▼ **Risk of Executive Overreach:**

- o Broad powers under Section 69A may create concerns regarding excessive state control over digital platforms.
- o Future misuse could affect digital freedoms and democratic discourse.

WAY FORWARD

- ✳ **Enhance Transparency:** Publish non-sensitive portions of blocking orders and reasons wherever possible.
- ✳ **Strengthen Targeted Enforcement:** Prioritise channel-level and account-level actions before resorting to platform-wide restrictions.
- ✳ **Improve Cyber Investigation Capacity:** Focus on identifying and prosecuting criminal networks

responsible for digital fraud.

- ✳ **Develop Clear Proportionality Standards:** Establish objective criteria for determining when platform-wide blocking becomes necessary.
- ✳ **Strengthen Judicial Oversight:** Ensure regular review of blocking orders to balance national interests with fundamental rights.

CONCLUSION

The Telegram blocking case marks a significant evolution in India's digital regulatory framework. While the judgment strengthens the government's ability to tackle organised cyber-enabled threats, it also underscores the need to balance **national security, examination integrity, and public order with transparency, accountability, and constitutional freedoms** in an increasingly digital society.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 represents the State's attempt to balance digital freedom with national security and public order concerns." Examine in the light of the recent Telegram blocking case. **(15 marks) (250 words)**

WEEKLY DOSSIERS

WORLD'S LARGEST SCIENCE MACHINE FACES A CRITICAL CROSSROADS

Why in the News?

- ◆ The **Large Hadron Collider (LHC)** at **CERN** has entered its third **Long Shutdown (2026–2030)** for a major upgrade into the **High-Luminosity LHC (HL-LHC)**. Simultaneously, CERN has endorsed plans for the **Future Circular Collider (FCC)**, reigniting debates on the future of **high-energy physics**.

Introduction

- ◆ The **LHC**, the world's largest particle accelerator, transformed modern physics through the discovery of the **Higgs Boson** in 2012. However, the continued absence of evidence for **dark matter**, **dark energy**, and **supersymmetry** has raised questions about the need for larger and costlier scientific facilities.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The **LHC**, located beneath the **Franco-Swiss border**, accelerates protons to near-light speeds and studies the fundamental structure of matter.
- ◆ The **High-Luminosity Upgrade** aims to increase collision rates by nearly **five times**, enhancing the probability of detecting rare particles.
- ◆ Since 2009, the LHC has
 - Confirmed the **Standard Model of Particle Physics**.
 - Discovered the **Higgs Boson**.
 - Identified exotic particles such as **tetraquarks** and **pentaquarks**.
 - Recreated **quark-gluon plasma**, mimicking conditions immediately after the **Big Bang**.
- ◆ CERN's proposed **Future Circular Collider (FCC)**, a **91-km** accelerator estimated to cost **\$19 billion**, seeks to probe mysteries related to **dark matter**, **dark energy**, and the origin of the universe.
- ◆ The project also drives innovation in **superconducting magnets**, **accelerator technology**, **distributed computing**, and **international scientific cooperation**.

Challenges

- ◆ No definitive evidence yet for **dark matter** or **supersymmetric particles**.
- ◆ Massive **financial costs** and long implementation timelines.
- ◆ Growing debate over the **cost-benefit ratio** of mega-science projects.
- ◆ Competition for public funding amid global geopolitical and economic pressures.
- ◆ Technological limitations in achieving significantly higher collision energies.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Strengthen Global Collaboration** – Expand participation of countries, industries, and research institutions to share costs and expertise.
- ◆ **Enhance Precision Physics Research** – Use the **HL-LHC** to collect higher-quality data before committing to larger projects.
- ◆ **Promote Indigenous Technological Development** – Encourage member countries, including **India**, to contribute to advanced accelerator and detector technologies.
- ◆ **Increase Industry–Academia Partnerships** – Leverage collider projects to drive innovation in **AI**, **quantum technologies**, and **advanced materials**.
- ◆ **Adopt Phased Investment Models** – Ensure periodic scientific and financial reviews before proceeding to subsequent stages of the **FCC**.

Conclusion

- ◆ The future of **particle physics** lies in balancing **scientific ambition** with **economic sustainability**. Investments in next-generation colliders could unlock answers to some of the universe's deepest mysteries while generating transformative technological and societal benefits.

RISE IN FOOD POISONING CASES HIGHLIGHTS GAPS IN FOOD SAFETY

Introduction

Recent food poisoning incidents in Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Bhiwandi (Maharashtra), affecting over 200 people, have renewed concerns regarding the implementation of the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSS Act), 2006.

Key Findings

- ◆ **Rising Burden of Food Poisoning:** Over **130 deaths in Jharkhand** and more than **200 deaths in Uttar Pradesh** were reported in 2024.
- ◆ **Poor Performance on State Food Safety Index:** Nearly **three-fourths of States and UTs scored below 50 out of 100**, indicating weak food safety governance.
- ◆ **Inadequate Inspections and Testing:** The FSS Act mandates regular inspections and food sample testing. However, inspections remain significantly lower than the number of registered Food Business Operators (FBOs).
- ◆ **Human Resource Deficit:** Only **2,997 of 4,208 sanctioned Food Safety Officer posts** were filled across States and UTs.
- ◆ **Public Health Impact:** According to the **WHO Foodborne Disease Estimates 2026**, unsafe food causes **866 million illnesses** and **1.5 million deaths annually** worldwide.

Challenges

- ◆ Weak enforcement of food safety regulations.
- ◆ Shortage of Food Safety Officers and laboratory infrastructure.
- ◆ Low frequency of inspections and sample testing.

- ◆ Poor consumer awareness regarding food hygiene.
- ◆ Inadequate monitoring of informal food businesses.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Strengthen Food Safety Infrastructure:** Expand accredited laboratories and modern testing facilities in all States.
- ◆ **Fill Human Resource Vacancies:** Recruit adequate **Food Safety Officers (FSOs)** and technical personnel.
- ◆ **Adopt Risk-Based Surveillance:** Implement the amended **risk-based inspection framework** for high-risk food establishments.
- ◆ **Enhance Digital Monitoring:** Use **AI, GIS mapping, and real-time compliance platforms** to track violations.
- ◆ **Promote Consumer Awareness:** Conduct mass campaigns on food hygiene, adulteration detection, and grievance redressal.

Conclusion

Ensuring food safety is essential for achieving **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)** and improving human capital. Strengthening regulatory capacity, inspections, and public awareness is crucial to prevent avoidable illnesses and deaths from unsafe food.

INDIA'S CHILDBIRTH DIVIDE: BEYOND PUBLIC VS PRIVATE HEALTHCARE

Why in the News?

Recent findings from **NFHS-6 (2023-24)** and **SRS Statistical Report 2024** reveal significant disparities in childbirth patterns between public and private healthcare institutions, raising concerns about healthcare quality, affordability, and regulation.

Key Findings

- ◆ **Significant Rise in Institutional Deliveries:** Institutional births increased from **82.8% (2019)** to **95.4% (2024)**. This reflects improved maternal healthcare access and reduced dependence on home deliveries.
- ◆ **Public Hospitals Remain the Primary Provider:** About **71.7% of births** occur in government hospitals, while **23.7%** occur in private facilities. Rural India records **76.6%** of deliveries in public hospitals compared to **56.9%** in urban areas.
- ◆ **Wide Interstate Variations:** **Jammu & Kashmir (95.5%)**, **Madhya Pradesh (91.3%)**, and **Rajasthan**

(90.9%) rely predominantly on government facilities.

- o **Kerala** records the highest private-sector share, with **69.6%** of births occurring in private hospitals.
- ◆ **Urban Shift Towards Private Healthcare:** Urban middle-class households increasingly prefer private facilities.
- ◆ Example: Private hospital births account for **52.2% in urban Karnataka**, **46.5% in urban Tamil Nadu**, and **45.3% in urban Uttar Pradesh**.
- ◆ 5. Quality and Accessibility Influence Choice
- ◆ Women often avoid public facilities due to **overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, staff shortages, and long waiting times**.
- ◆ Private deliveries can cost nearly **nine times more** than public hospital deliveries, increasing financial stress.

Concerns

- ◆ **High Caesarean Section Rates**
 - NFHS-6 reports **54.1% C-section deliveries** in private hospitals compared to **16.9%** in public hospitals.
 - This is far above the **WHO-recommended level of 10–15%**.
- ◆ **Weak Regulatory Oversight**
 - Limited monitoring of private maternity care raises concerns about unnecessary medical interventions.
- ◆ **Persistent Regional Inequalities**
 - Better maternal outcomes depend not only on institutional delivery but also on healthcare quality and public health infrastructure.
- ◆ **Financial Burden on Families**
 - Dependence on expensive private care can lead to catastrophic health expenditure.
- ◆ **Incomplete Implementation of Regulations**
 - The **Clinical Establishments Act, 2010** has been adopted by only a limited number of States and

suffers from weak enforcement.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Strengthen Public Health Infrastructure:** Improve labour rooms, staffing, equipment, and maternal healthcare services.
- ◆ **Regulate Caesarean Deliveries:** Mandate disclosure and auditing of C-section rates, especially in private hospitals.
- ◆ **Ensure Uniform Implementation of Clinical Establishments Act:** Establish common standards for maternity care across States.
- ◆ **Enhance Accountability under Ayushman Bharat:** Require empanelled hospitals to report maternal health outcomes and intervention rates.

Conclusion

India's success in achieving near-universal institutional deliveries must now be complemented by a focus on **quality, affordability, regulation, and informed choice**. Maternal healthcare policy should move beyond access alone to ensure safe, equitable, and accountable childbirth services for all women.

BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

Supreme Court: Representation of People Act Not Applicable to Municipal Elections

- ◆ The **Supreme Court** held that the **Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA)** applies only to elections to **Parliament and State Legislatures** and **does not extend to municipal elections**.
- ◆ The Court clarified that candidates who file **false affidavits in local body elections** can still be prosecuted under relevant provisions of the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** where municipal laws do not provide specific penalties.
- ◆ It also reaffirmed that candidates must disclose the assets of **themselves, their spouses, and dependents**, emphasizing the importance of transparency and integrity in the electoral process.

Remission Policy under Article 161 Prevails over Statutory Policy: Supreme Court

- ◆ The Supreme Court held that a **remission policy issued under the Governor's constitutional powers under Article 161** cannot be overridden by a later **statutory remission policy framed under Sections 432–433 of the CrPC**.
- ◆ The Court ruled that Haryana's **2002 remission policy**, issued under Article 161, remained valid despite the introduction of the **2008 statutory policy**. It also declared its 2021 judgment in **State of Haryana v. Raj Kumar** as **per incuriam** for being contrary to the larger Bench ruling in **State of Haryana v. Jagdish (2010)**.
- ◆ The Court directed Haryana to reconsider the convict's premature release application under the more liberal 2002 policy, reaffirming the supremacy of constitutional clemency powers over statutory provisions.

Bombay High Court on Right to Protest and Freedom of Expression

- ◆ The **Bombay High Court** quashed an externment order issued against **Saeed Ahmad Abdul Wahid Chaudhary**,

holding that **mere opposition to government policies and participation in protests cannot be grounds for externment** under the Maharashtra Police Act.

- ♦ The Court observed that citizens have a fundamental right to **freedom of speech and peaceful protest under Article 19**, as well as the right to **live with dignity under Article 21**.
- ♦ It emphasized that police authorities, as public servants, cannot use coercive measures against individuals solely for expressing dissent, reaffirming the constitutional importance of democratic participation and free expression.

Supreme Court on AI Hallucinations in Courts

- ♦ The **Supreme Court** held that citing **AI-generated fake or hallucinated judicial precedents** without verification amounts to professional misconduct, and any judgment relying on such non-existent cases is **void in the eyes of law**.
- ♦ Adopting a **zero-tolerance approach**, the Court directed the **Bar Council of India** to frame guidelines to prevent the misuse of AI in legal proceedings while permitting its legitimate use.

Calcutta High Court on Human Dignity of Accused Persons

- ♦ The **Calcutta High Court** held that **human dignity and constitutional protections under Articles 14, 19, and 21 extend to every accused person**, irrespective of the allegations against them.
- ♦ Observing that the public cannot take the law into its own hands, the Court directed the **West Bengal DGP** to issue statewide guidelines to prevent **egg-throwing, mob violence, lynching, and public humiliation of accused persons**.
- ♦ It emphasized that protecting the dignity and security of accused individuals is a **constitutional obligation of the State** and an essential component of the rule of law.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are the District Magistrate of a district where a ₹500 crore rural drinking water project is being implemented to provide safe drinking water to thousands of villagers. The project is being executed by a private contractor. During implementation, a whistleblower submits evidence alleging that substandard materials are being used, inspection reports are being manipulated with the support of some government officials, and political pressure is being exerted to overlook irregularities so that the project can be completed before elections. At the same time, any halt in the project may delay water supply to needy villagers. The issue has also attracted media attention, raising concerns about public trust in the administration.

In this situation:

- Identify the ethical issues involved in the case.
- Who are the stakeholders, and what are their respective interests?
- What are the options available to you? Evaluate their merits and demerits.
- As the District Magistrate, what course of action would you adopt? Justify your decision with reference to ethical principles of integrity, accountability, transparency, public service, and compassion.

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- Critical thinking:** While returning home after his night shift, Naik Suk Bahadur Tamang of the Rorathang Police Outpost, Sikkim, noticed boulders beginning to slide onto the Rangpo–Rorathang road. Without waiting for backup or equipment, he immediately stopped traffic from both directions, preventing vehicles from entering the danger zone moments before a major landslide struck.
- Compassion :** An Anganwadi worker in Navi Mumbai allegedly kicked a young child—later identified as her own daughter—while conducting activities at the Anganwadi centre, claiming the child was disturbing the class. This triggered a police investigation and departmental inquiry, and highlighted the importance of compassion in childcare.
- Innovation:** Azaan Merchant and Gaurav Sanghai founded Bharat Intelligence, an AI-powered platform that connects farmers with skilled agricultural labourers through WhatsApp, replacing informal hiring with a reliable and transparent system. The initiative has increased workers' monthly incomes from ₹6,000–7,000 to around ₹20,000, while ensuring timely labour availability, greater dignity of work, and higher farm productivity.
- Governance Ethics:** IAS officer Avishyant Panda is strengthening Gadchiroli's water security ahead of a possible El Niño by completing over 4,600 water conservation works, 1,000 irrigation projects, and desilting water bodies to increase storage capacity.
- Inclusive Leadership:** Saainirmala Perumall, a former software professional and psychotherapist, founded Niragh Foods in Bengaluru in 2021 after recognising the challenges working families faced in preparing traditional meals. Starting with just four homemakers in a 600 sq. ft. kitchen, the enterprise has grown into a 10,000 sq. ft. unit employing around 60 women, creating livelihoods while preserving authentic, preservative-free South Indian food.
- Resilience:** Born with cerebral palsy, Anurag Rawat was forced to leave school after Class 8 and abandon his dream of joining the Army. Through consistent training, he completed a 10 km high-altitude run in Uttarakhand's Niti Valley at nearly 12,000 feet and built an online community of over 2 lakh people by sharing his journey.
- Environmental Ethics:** Researchers at Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, successfully demonstrated a 12-day pilot using a plasma pyrolysis reactor that converted 10 different waste streams (including temple flowers, plastics, tyres, and food waste) into biofuels, fertilisers, and industrial materials, leaving virtually no landfill waste.

MODEL ESSAY

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman"

Introduction

- A statement from *The Second Sex* by **Simone de Beauvoir** argues that gender is **socially constructed**, not biologically fixed.
- Highlights how society shapes what it means to be a "woman" through norms, roles.
- A six-year-old girl is asked to clean a spilled tea and praised as a "responsible little lady," while her brother is told to avoid the mess and go play – gender roles are actively taught rather than innate.

Mechanisms of 'Becoming' a Woman

- **Family Socialisation:** Girls are encouraged to be obedient, caring, and modest.
- **Cultural Norms and Patriarchy:** Practices like dowry, son preference, and marriage pressure define women's roles
- **Education System:** Hidden curriculum reinforces gender roles, STEM fields historically male-dominated
- **Media and Popular Culture:** Films and advertisements portray ideal women as self-sacrificing and family-oriented - Social media creates pressures related to beauty standards.
- **Religion and Tradition:** Religious texts and customs prescribe gender-specific duties - Ritual roles sometimes exclude or limit women's participation.
- **Economic Structures:** Women concentrated in unpaid care work and informal sector jobs - Gender wage gap reinforces dependency.

Real Examples of Change

- Shiva Chouhan – First woman officer deployed at the Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield.
- Falguni Nayar – Built Nykaa into a billion-dollar e-commerce and beauty empire.

- Gita Gopinath – Became First Deputy Managing Director of the IMF, shaping global economic policy.
- Kudumbashree – Empowered women through community-based poverty eradication and governance.

Critical Perspective

- **Role of Biological Differences:** The argument **underestimate biological influences** such as hormonal differences and reproductive roles
- **Over-Socialisation Thesis:** It risks portraying individuals as **passive products of society**, ignoring human agency and the ability to reinterpret gender roles.
- **Neglect of Positive Identities:** Not all gender roles are oppressive; some women may **embrace traditional roles** as a matter of choice and identity Eg: "Tradwife" (Traditional Wife) Movement
- **Emerging Gender Fluidity Challenges:** With contemporary recognition of **non-binary and fluid identities**, the binary focus on "woman" may appear limited

Conclusion

- While biology provides a base, society shapes roles—but individuals also have the agency to challenge and redefine them.
- Thus, the aim is to move from imposed "becoming" to a **self-determined identity**.

Sample Quotes

- *Everything else can wait, but not agriculture* - Jawaharlal Nehru
- *The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence* - Tagore
- *Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it and whatever he does to the web, he does to himself* - Chief Seattle

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS I: INDIAN ART & CULTURE

- **Rani Durgavati (1524–1564)** was a Chandela princess from Kalinjar who married Dalpat Shah, the Gond ruler of Garha-Katanga.
- After her husband's death in 1548, she ruled as regent for her son Bir Narayan and ensured political stability and prosperity in the kingdom.
- She promoted irrigation through reservoirs such as **Ranital, Cherital, and Adhartal**, patronised learning, and successfully repelled Baz Bahadur of Malwa.
- Renowned for her bravery, she chose martyrdom in 1564 while resisting the Mughal forces led by Asaf Khan, making her a lasting symbol of courage, good governance, and resistance against foreign domination.



GS I: GEOGRAPHICAL PHENOMENON

- Two powerful earthquakes of **magnitude 7.2 and 7.5** struck western Venezuela near Yumare, forming a rare **earthquake doublet**.
- Unlike a typical earthquake sequence where a major quake is followed by smaller aftershocks, **doublets** consist of two earthquakes of similar magnitude occurring in quick succession due to closely linked fault ruptures.



GS III: ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

- Tamil Nadu will deploy **India's first 3D-printed artificial reef** under **PMMSY**. Developed by **Tvasta (IIT Madras)** and **ICAR-CMFRI**, it is designed to restore marine ecosystems, enhance fish habitats, support coral growth, improve biodiversity, and strengthen the livelihoods of coastal fishing communities.



GS III: AGRICULTURE

- **BHARATI (Bharat's Hub for Agritech, Resilience, Advancement and Incubation for Export Innovation)** is a flagship initiative of **APEDA** aimed at promoting **innovation-driven growth in India's agri-food export sector**.
- The programme supports startups, entrepreneurs, and agritech innovators to develop export-oriented solutions and enhance global competitiveness. It has been launched to help achieve APEDA's target of **\$50 billion in agri-food exports of scheduled products by 2030**.



GS III: ENERGY

- **Grid India** has proposed converting underutilised thermal power plants into **Synchronous Condensers (SYNCONs)** to improve grid stability amid increasing renewable energy integration.
- A SYNCON is a **freely spinning generator that does not generate electricity but provides inertia and voltage support**, helping maintain grid stability, especially in power systems with high penetration of **solar and wind energy**.



GS III: INDIAN ECONOMY

- **Tourism Sector in India-** Tourism contributes around **US\$231.6 billion** to the Indian economy and generated **US\$35.016 billion** in foreign exchange earnings in 2024.
- India received **20.6 million international arrivals** in 2024, improving its global tourism ranking from **25th (2016) to 20th**.
- India is also the **8th largest tourism economy** in the world and ranks **39th globally** in the **WEF Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024**.

- India ranked **4th globally with 61 unicorns** in the **Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2026**, slipping one position from the previous year. The index tracks privately held startups valued at **US\$1 billion or more**, highlighting trends in innovation, entrepreneurship, and venture capital across countries.



GS II: INDIAN POLITY

- The **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)** and **National Election Watch (NEW)** have released an analysis of the background details of sitting **Rajya Sabha MPs**, highlighting concerns regarding the criminalisation of politics.
- Out of **226 MPs analysed**, **69 MPs** have declared criminal cases, while **36 MPs (16%)** face serious criminal charges such as murder, crimes against women, corruption, and electoral offences.
- **e-Zero FIR** is an **I4C** initiative that automatically converts verified cyber financial fraud complaints into **Zero FIRs**.
- Under **BNSS, 2023**, a Zero FIR allows reporting of a **cognizable offence** at any police station regardless of jurisdiction and can later be transferred to the concerned police station.
- Electronic filing is optional, and police may conduct a preliminary enquiry with DSP-level approval.
- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** has clarified that a **passport is primarily a travel document and not conclusive proof of Indian citizenship**.
- Under **Section 20 of the Passports Act, 1967**, the Central Government may, in public interest, issue a passport or travel document even to a **non-citizen**, subject to prescribed conditions.

CHERRY PICKS OF THE WEEK

OMEGA BLOCK

- It is a large-scale atmospheric blocking pattern that resembles the Greek letter **Ω (Omega)**. It forms when a strong **high-pressure system becomes trapped between two low-pressure systems**, disrupting the normal west-to-east movement of weather systems.
- The persistent high pressure causes **sinking air**, suppresses cloud formation, and allows prolonged sunshine. Warm air becomes trapped near the surface, leading to **compressional heating**, which can result in extended periods of **heatwaves, dry conditions, and stable weather**.

AI HALLUCINATION

- It refers to an AI system generating **false, misleading, or fabricated information** and presenting it as accurate. For example, **Google's Bard** wrongly claimed that the **James Webb Space Telescope** captured the first image of a planet outside the solar system.

INSURANCE SURETY BONDS (ISBS)

- They are **financial guarantees issued by insurance companies** that compensate the government or project owner if a contractor or allocatee fails to fulfil contractual obligations.

PERFORMANCE BANK GUARANTEES (PBGS)

- They are **bank-issued guarantees** that ensure a project developer fulfils contractual obligations. If the developer defaults, the government or project authority can recover the guaranteed amount from the bank.

GREEN METHANOL

- It is a **low-carbon form of methanol**, a colourless liquid used in the production of chemicals such as **formaldehyde, acetic acid, and plastics**.
- It can also be used as a fuel, though it is **flammable, costly, and requires larger storage tanks** than conventional fuels. Green methanol is produced from **biomass, renewable hydrogen, or captured carbon dioxide (carbon capture technologies)**.