

FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE

> INDIAN DELTAS

> STARTUP ECOSYSTEM IN INDIA

19th JANUARY, 2025 - 25th JANUARY, 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

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

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INDIAN DELTAS

Syllabus: GS I - Geography

PYQ MAPPING

Q) What are the environmental implications of the reclamation of water bodies into urban land use? explain with examples? (2021)

WHY IN NEWS

A **Nature (Jan 14, 2026)** study using **ESA's Sentinel-1 satellite data (2014–2023)** has revealed that **India's major river deltas are rapidly sinking**, largely due to **human activities**. The study highlights that **77% of the Brahmani delta** and **69% of the Mahanadi delta** are subsiding at **>5 mm/year**, often **faster than regional sea-level rise**.

INTRODUCTION

River deltas are among the **most fertile, densely populated, and economically vital regions** of the world. India's major deltas, **Ganga-Brahmaputra, Mahanadi, Brahmani, Godavari, Cauvery, and Kabani**, support millions through agriculture, fisheries, ports, and urban centres. While natural subsidence is a geological reality, the study shows that **anthropogenic pressures have converted a slow natural process into an environmental crisis**.

SHORT TAKES

➤ ESA's Sentinel-1

- It is a key Earth observation mission under the European Union's Copernicus Programme, designed to provide continuous, high-resolution, all-weather, day-and-night radar imagery. As a cornerstone of the Copernicus initiative, it is vital for environmental monitoring, maritime security, and disaster management.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDY

➔ High-resolution assessment:

- Used **Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar (InSAR)** from Sentinel-1 at **75 m spatial resolution**, covering **40 global deltas**, including **six Indian deltas**.

➔ Widespread subsidence in India:

- Over **90% of the Ganga-Brahmaputra, Brahmani, and Mahanadi deltas** are affected.

➔ Subsidence exceeds sea-level rise

- In most Indian deltas, **land sinking is faster than regional sea-level rise**, worsening relative sea-level increase.

➔ Human drivers identified

- Machine learning (random forest model) linked subsidence to:

- **Unsustainable groundwater extraction**
- **Reduced sediment flux**
- **Rapid urban expansion**

➔ Delta-specific stressors

- Ganga-Brahmaputra & Cauvery: groundwater over-extraction
- Brahmani: rapid urbanisation
- Mahanadi & Kabani: combined effects of groundwater use, sediment decline, and population pressure

➔ Risk classification warning

- Ganga-Brahmaputra delta has shifted from a **"latent threat" (20th century)** to an **"unprepared diver" (21st century)**, risking rising faster than governance capacity.

DELTA

A delta is a **depositional landform** that develops at the **mouth of a river**, where the river enters a sea, ocean, or lake and begins to **accumulate sediments faster than they are removed** by marine forces. As the river loses energy near its mouth, it **breaks into multiple distributary channels**. These channels branch, spread out, and sometimes merge again, forming an **interlinked network** over the deposited sediments.

The formation of a delta is driven by two fundamental mechanisms:

- ☛ A **sharp decline in river velocity** upon meeting a standing water body, which lowers the river's sediment-carrying capacity.
- ☛ The **interaction between suspended clay particles and saline water**, causing the particles to clump together and settle.

Sediments are deposited in an orderly pattern, with **coarser material settling first**, while **very fine particles travel farther and form bottom-set layers**. Depending on **sediment supply, wave and tidal action, and river discharge**, deltas take on **different shapes and structural types**.

TYPES

☛ Arcuate (Fan-Shaped) Delta

- o An arcuate delta develops where **sediment deposition is relatively light and evenly spread**, causing the river to split into **shallow, unstable distributaries**. Over time, these distributaries spread sediments outward, creating a **smooth, fan-like or bow-shaped outline** along the coast. Such deltas usually form where **wave action is moderate**, allowing sediments to be reworked but not completely removed.

- o **Examples:** Nile, Ganga, Indus rivers

☛ Bird's Foot Delta

- o A bird's foot delta forms when **river deposition dominates over marine forces**, and sediments, often rich in fine material like limestone or clay, **prevent water from percolating downward**.

- o The river flows outward over these deposits in **long, narrow distributary channels**, giving the delta a shape resembling a **bird's claw or foot**. These deltas occur in areas with **weak tides and currents**, resulting in **fewer distributaries** compared to arcuate deltas.

- o **Example:** Mississippi River Delta

☛ Estuaries

- o In some cases, instead of a delta, a river mouth becomes **submerged**, often due to **sea-level rise or the drowning of a river valley**. This creates an **estuary**, where **fresh river water mixes with saline seawater**.

- o As sediment deposition begins gradually, features such as **mudflats, marshes, and coastal plains** may develop.

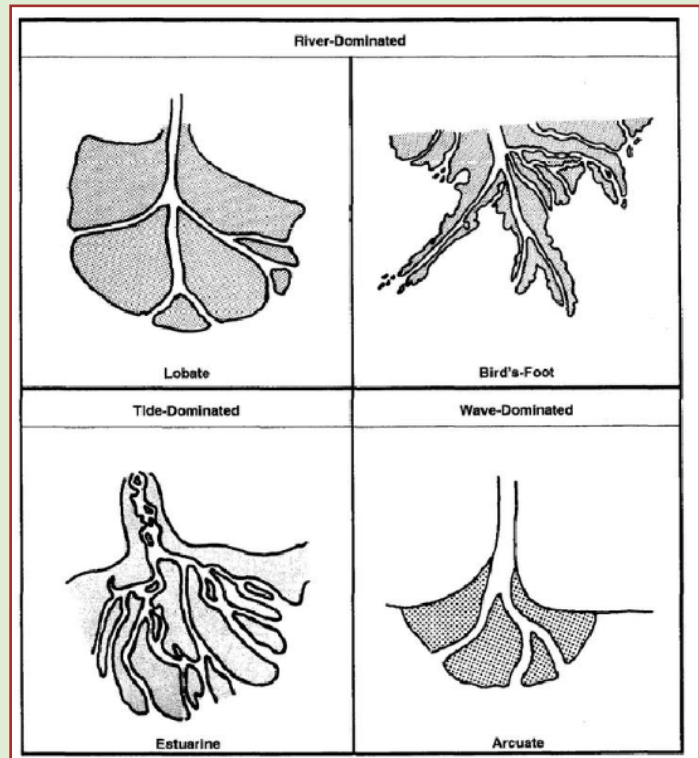
- o Estuaries are highly valuable as they provide **natural deep-water access**, making them ideal locations for **ports, fisheries, and industrial development**, especially when sheltered from strong tides and currents.

- o **Example:** Hudson Estuary

☛ Cuspate Delta

- o A cuspate delta is a **pointed or tooth-shaped delta** formed along coastlines subjected to **strong and persistent wave action**. Here, wave energy redistributes sediments symmetrically on both sides of the river mouth, preventing the development of multiple distributaries. As a result, **distributaries are few or entirely absent**.

- o **Example:** Tiber River Delta on the western coast of Italy



Major River Deltas of India

- ☞ **Ganga–Brahmaputra–Meghna Delta (Sundarbans Delta):** The largest delta in the world, created by the combined sediment deposits of the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers. It extends across West Bengal in India and Bangladesh and contains the **Sundarbans**, the world’s biggest mangrove ecosystem.
- ☞ **Godavari Delta:** Developed by the Godavari River along the eastern coast of Andhra Pradesh, this delta is among the **largest and most fertile deltas** on India’s east coast.
- ☞ **Brahmani Delta:** Formed by the Brahmani River, this delta lies in **Odisha** and contributes significantly to the region’s coastal and agricultural landscape.
- ☞ **Mahanadi Delta:** Located in Odisha, the Mahanadi River has built a broad and fertile delta that supports **dense population and intensive agriculture**.
- ☞ **Cauvery (Kaveri) Delta:** Created by the Cauvery River in Tamil Nadu, this delta is one of the **most intensively farmed areas in South India**.

MAJOR ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED

- ▼ **Increased flood vulnerability:**
 - Lower land elevation amplifies **coastal flooding, storm surges, and river floods**.
- ▼ **Permanent land loss:**
 - Accelerated subsidence can lead to **irreversible submergence** of deltaic regions.
- ▼ **Salinity intrusion:**
 - Seawater ingress contaminates **freshwater aquifers** and **agricultural soils**, reducing crop productivity.
- ▼ **Livelihood and migration stress:**
 - Agriculture and fisheries decline may trigger **distress migration and social conflict**.
- ▼ **Infrastructure damage:**
 - Ports, roads, railways, and urban infrastructure (e.g., **Kolkata**) face structural risks.
- ▼ **Governance and data gaps**
 - Inadequate local monitoring, outdated sediment data, and limited institutional preparedness.

WAY FORWARD

- * **Sustainable groundwater management:**
 - Enforce **aquifer-based regulation**, promote **micro-irrigation**, and recharge through wetlands and floodplains.
- * **Restore sediment flows**
 - Reassess **dam operations**, enable **sediment bypass systems**, and adopt basin-level planning.
- * **Delta-sensitive urban planning:**
 - Restrict heavy construction, regulate land reclamation, and integrate **subsidence maps** into city planning.
- * **Strengthen delta governance:**
 - Create **Delta Management Authorities** with scientific, administrative, and community representation.
- * **Early warning and monitoring**
 - Expand **satellite-based subsidence monitoring** and integrate it with disaster management systems.
- * **Climate adaptation & livelihoods:**
 - Promote **salinity-resilient crops**, mangrove restoration, and alternative livelihoods.
- * **Institutional capacity building:**
 - Shift from reactive disaster response to **anticipatory adaptation planning**.

CONCLUSION

The study clearly establishes that **human activity, not just climate change**, is driving rapid subsidence in India’s deltas. With subsidence often **outpacing sea-level rise**, the threat is immediate and compounding. Addressing this challenge requires **integrated river basin management, sustainable resource use, and strong institutions**. Protecting India’s deltas is not only an environmental necessity but also a **developmental and national security imperative**.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Satellite studies show that India’s major river deltas are rapidly subsiding due to human activities. Discuss the causes and impacts of deltaic subsidence in India and suggest suitable measures to address it **(10 marks) (150 words)**

SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE

Syllabus: GS I - The Freedom Struggle

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Discuss the contributions of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to pre- and post-independent India. (2013)

WHY IN NEWS

23 January is observed as **Parakram Diwas** to commemorate Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary, symbolising a renewed emphasis on overcoming colonial-era narratives.

INTRODUCTION

Subhas Chandra Bose **emerged as one of the most radical and uncompromising leaders of India's freedom struggle**, offering an alternative path to independence through militant nationalism and international diplomacy. His life and politics reflected a deep impatience with colonial rule and a belief that freedom had to be actively seized rather than negotiated.

EARLY LIFE

- ➔ **Birth & Family:** Born on **23 January 1897** in **Cuttack (then Orissa)** into a prosperous Bengali Kayastha family; father *Janakinath Bose* was a prominent lawyer and mother *Prabhavati* a devoted homemaker.
- ➔ **Education:** Studied at *Presidency College* and *Scottish Church College* in Calcutta; expelled in 1916 for nationalist activities.
- ➔ **ICS Attempt & Resignation:** Went to **Cambridge**, passed the Indian Civil Service (ICS) exam in 1920 but gave up the prestigious position to join the freedom struggle.
- ➔ **Early Nationalist Involvement:** Returned to India and joined the Non-Cooperation Movement; worked with Chittaranjan Das and became involved in youth mobilization.

ENTRY INTO POLITICS

- 🕒 **Joining Congress:** Bose entered mainstream politics through the **Indian National Congress** and rose rapidly due to his organizational skills.
- 🕒 **Youth Leadership:** Served as *Chief Executive Officer of Calcutta Municipal Corporation* and later elected president of Bengal Congress
- 🕒 **Congress Leadership:** Alongside **Jawaharlal Nehru**, he became one of the two General Secretaries of Congress, reflecting his growing influence.
- 🕒 **Imprisonments & Deportation:** Faced repeated arrests and was even deported to Burma due to revolutionary associations before resuming leadership roles.
- 🕒 **Recognition of Bose's Leadership:** In 1939, Rabindranath Tagore hailed Bose as *Deshnayak* (Leader of the Nation), emphasising the need for inspired and valiant leadership during national crises.

GANDHI AND BOSE

- ♣️ **Ideological Differences:** Bose admired Gandhi's sincerity but differed sharply on strategy as Gandhi advocated non-violence, while Bose supported more assertive action against British rule.
- ♣️ **Congress Presidency:** Elected Congress President in **1938** and again in **1939**, defeating Gandhi's preferred candidates both times.
- ♣️ **Break with Gandhi:** Tensions over approaches to independence, especially during WWII, led Bose to resign as Congress President in 1939 after friction with Gandhi's faction.
- ♣️ **Mutual Respect:** Despite differences, Bose continued to acknowledge Gandhi's role and even referred to him as "Father of the Nation".

FORWARD BLOC

- 🌀 **Formation:** After resigning from Congress in **1939**, Bose founded the **Forward Bloc** to unite radical nationalists and left-wing elements within the freedom movement.
- 🌀 **Objectives:** Aimed to consolidate anti-British forces and promote a more militant approach to achieving independence.
- 🌀 **Mobilization & Symbolism:** Bose led mass rallies and

used symbolic practices like pledges signed in blood to emphasize commitment.

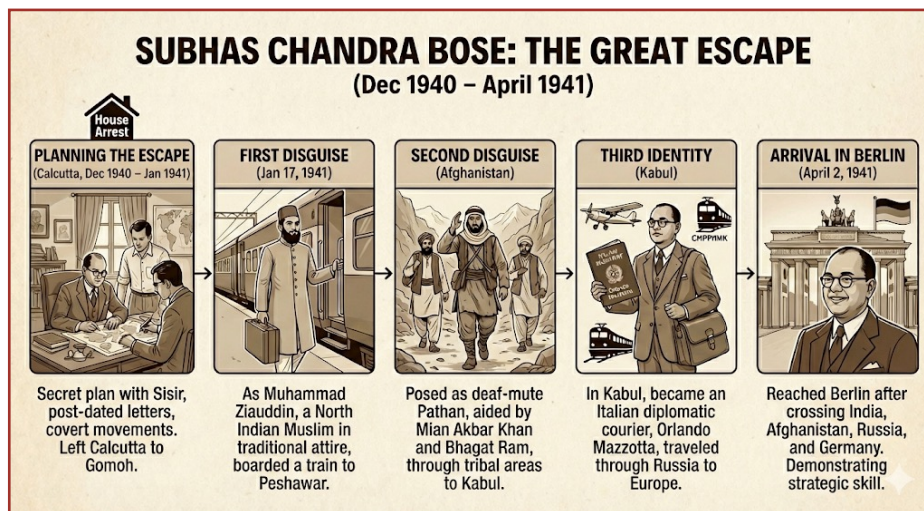
Madras Visit of 1939

- o Bose’s arrival in Madras on 3 September 1939 marked a major moment in radical nationalist mobilisation in South India.
- o He was received by leaders such as **S Srinivasa Iyengar and Pasumpon U Muthuramalinga Thevar** and addressed a massive gathering at Marina Beach.
- o Muthuramalinga Thevar emerged as a key Forward Bloc leader in Tamil Nadu and became known as the **“Bose of the South.”**
- o The founding of the Tamil weekly *Netaji* helped

disseminate Bose’s ideology and mobilise grassroots support.

Holwell Monument Controversy:

- o Bose actively led the campaign to remove the Holwell Monument in Calcutta, which **memorialised British deaths during the “Black Hole of Calcutta”** incident.
- o He viewed it as a colonial distortion of Indian history and this activism led to his **arrest under the Defence of India Rules and charges of sedition** in July 1940.
- o Bose launched a fast unto death while imprisoned, forcing the British to release him temporarily, although they intended to rearrest him once his health improved.



ROLE DURING WORLD WAR II

- ☀ **Escape & Exile:** In **1941**, Bose famously escaped British surveillance in Calcutta and travelled via Afghanistan, USSR, and Europe to reach **Nazi Germany** and later **Japan** seeking international support.
- ☀ **Axis Diplomacy:** Established the *Free India Centre* in Berlin, broadcast messages, and organized the Indian Legion — aiming to use global conflict to weaken British control.
- ☀ **Asian Strategy:** Realizing greater prospects in the East, he moved to **Japan-controlled Southeast Asia** in 1943, aligning with Japanese forces to further India’s liberation cause.
- ☀ **Provisional Government:** On **21 October 1943**, Bose proclaimed the **Provisional Government of Free India (Azad Hind)** in Singapore, issuing its own currency, stamps, and declaring war on Britain and the USA.

INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

- ★ **INA under Bose:** Bose reorganised and revitalized the **Indian National Army (INA)**, originally started under Mohan Singh, into a larger force for armed struggle against the British.
- ★ **Composition:**
 - o INA comprised Indian POWs captured by the Japanese, expatriate volunteers, and included units like the **Rani of Jhansi Regiment** (women’s unit).
 - o In 1943 at Singapore’s Padang, Bose appealed to women, leading nearly 1,000 Tamil women to join the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.
- ★ **Campaigns:** INA, in coordination with Japanese forces, fought in the **Imphal and Kohima** fronts against British troops, aiming to enter India and spark revolt.
- ★ **Slogans & Morale:** Bose’s rallying cries like **“Give me blood, and I shall give you freedom!”** and **“Chalo Delhi!”** became emblematic of INA’s spirit.
- ★ **Egalitarian and Anti-Caste Ethos:** Women trained alongside men, caste divisions were rejected, and leadership roles were open to all, reflecting Bose’s egalitarian vision.

CONTROVERSIES AND DEBATES

🌟 Alliance with Axis Powers:

- o Bose's alignment with **Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan** remains controversial due to the moral implications of associating with fascist regimes.

🌟 Methods vs Non-violence:

- o Debate persists on whether his militant strategy complemented or conflicted with the broader non-violent movement led by Gandhi and Congress.

🌟 Death Mystery:

- o Subhas Chandra Bose is believed to have died on **August 18, 1945**, three days after the end of World War II in the eastern theatre, following a **plane crash in Taipei in Taiwan** (then under Japanese occupation).
- o After his death, his remains were taken to **Tokyo**, where Indian exiles arranged for the urn to be preserved at **Renkoji Temple**, where it remains to

this day.

- o Given Netaji's earlier dramatic escapes (from **India in 1941** and **Germany in 1943**) speculation arose over whether he had died or escaped again, fuelling long-lasting public debate and conspiracy theories.
- o The Government of India appointed **three inquiry commissions** in **1956, 1979, and 1999** to investigate Netaji's death.
- o A total of **ten reports** from these investigations concluded that Netaji **died on the night of August 18, 1945** due to the plane crash, except the **Justice Mukherjee Commission (1999)**, which gave **inconclusive findings**.

🌟 Post-War Legacy:

- o Some criticisms also focus on tactical choices and whether INA's military campaigns significantly hastened independence.

LEGACY AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

🌟 Symbol of Courage:

- o Celebrated as one of India's foremost freedom fighters whose bold vision inspired national pride.

🌟 Azad Hind Government's Significance:

- o His proclamation of a provisional government and INA's campaign provided **a symbolic parallel front** against British colonialism.

🌟 Historiographical Impact:

- o Bose continues to be studied as a complex leader whose strategy, nationalism, and international diplomacy broadened the freedom struggle's narrative.

🌟 Parakram Diwas:

- o The Government of India commemorates his birth anniversary **23 January** as *Parakram Diwas* to honour his courage and commitment.

🌟 Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar:

- o The **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar** recognises individuals and institutions for

exceptional contributions and selfless service in disaster management.

- o In 2024, **Lt Col Seeta Ashok Shelke** received the individual award for leading the **Wayanad landslide relief operations**, while the **Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA)** was honoured in the institutional category.

🌟 Commemoration through Public Infrastructure:

- o In January 2021, Indian Railways **renamed the Kalka Mail as the Netaji Express** to mark his birth anniversary and its historical association with him.
- o Netaji **escaped from Calcutta, reached Gomoh station, and boarded the Kalka Mail in disguise on January 18, 1941**, during the freedom struggle.

🌟 Revival of Netaji in Contemporary Cultural Discourse:

- o A recent exhibition, **"India's Visual Political Iconicity, Part 2 – Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose"**, **curated by Neville Tuli**, held at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, showcased how popular visual media such as calendars, posters and lithographs shaped public memory of his life and legacy.

CONCLUSION

Despite controversies surrounding his methods and alliances, Bose's contribution lay in expanding the ideological and strategic boundaries of India's freedom movement. His legacy endures as a symbol of courage, sacrifice, and the plurality of paths that ultimately converged towards India's independence.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Assess the legacy of Subhas Chandra Bose in shaping nationalist consciousness in India.
(10 marks) (150 words)

GOVERNOR'S SPECIAL ADDRESS AND FEDERALISM

GS II: Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Discuss the essential conditions for exercise of the legislative powers by the Governor. Discuss the legality of re-promulgation of ordinances by the Governor without placing them before the Legislature. **(2022)**

Q) Though the federal principle is dominant in our constitution and that principle is one of its basic features, but it is equally true that federalism under the Indian Constitution leans in favour of a strong Center, a feature that militates against the concept of strong federalism. Discuss. **(2014)**

WHY IN NEWS

Recently, Governors in several opposition-ruled states such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have **refused to read or have altered the customary special address to the state legislature**, triggering political confrontations and renewed debate on the constitutional role and discretionary limits of the Governor under Article 176.

INTRODUCTION

The Governor's special address, enshrined in Article 176 of the Constitution, serves as a formal platform for outlining the state government's legislative and policy agenda to the legislature. Beyond its procedural purpose, it reflects the dynamics of India's federal structure and the relationship between the Centre and the states.

SHORT TAKES

> Sarkaria Commission:

- o Set up in **1983** under Justice R.S. Sarkaria, it reviewed **Centre–State relations** and suggested measures for cooperative federalism.
- o Its **1988 report** recommended consultation mechanisms, limits on Article 356, and strengthening the Inter-State Council.

> Punchhi Commission:

- o Set up in **2007** under Justice M.M. Punchhi, it examined **Centre–State relations** in the modern context.
- o Its **2010 report** recommended clarifying the Governor's role, enhancing cooperative federalism, and modernising dispute-resolution mechanisms.

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

Historical Roots:

- o The practice of the Governor addressing the legislature is derived from **British parliamentary practice**, where a legislative session formally begins only after the **sovereign declares the reasons for summoning the House**.
- o It has historical roots in **Section 63 of the Government of India Act, 1935**, which allowed Governors to address provincial legislatures at their discretion.
- o From April 1937, during provincial autonomy, the Governor's speech was prepared in consultation with the Council of Ministers, laying down the legislative agenda.
- o In the **Constituent Assembly**, it was clarified that the Governor's address should reflect the **policy of the elected Council of Ministers**, not the Governor's personal views.

Article 163:

- o This provision requires that the Governor act on the **aid and advice** of the Council of Ministers, headed by the Chief Minister, in the exercise of most of his functions; the Governor only exercises functions in his **discretion** where the Constitution specifically allows it

Article 175:

- o This article gives the Governor the **right** to address the State Legislature and to send messages to it, including in relation to pending Bills, but it does **not** make such addresses mandatory.

Article 176:

- o Requires the Governor to address the legislature at the **commencement of the first session after general elections and at the start of each legislative year**.
 - The speech is prepared by the Council of Ministers and delivered by the Governor to outline the government's achievements and policy roadmap.

- o The rules of procedure of the House must make provision for time to be allotted for discussion of the matters referred to in that address.

Judicial Clarification

- o **Shamsher Singh vs State of Punjab (1974)**: Held that the Governor is only a constitutional head

who acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers.

- o **Nabam Rebia vs Deputy Speaker (2016)**: The Supreme Court reiterated that the address under Article 175 or 176 is to be performed by the Governor on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.

prepared by the **DMK government** contained “inaccuracies” and “misleading statements”, and claimed the governor’s **microphone was repeatedly switched off**.

RECENT INCIDENTS

Karnataka

Date & event:

- o On **22 January 2026**, Governor **Thaawarchand Gehlot** addressed the **joint session of the Karnataka Legislature** but read only the opening and concluding lines of a 43-page Cabinet-approved speech.
- o He then **left the Assembly before the national anthem** was played.

Context:

- o The cabinet’s 43-page speech included critiques of central policies like the repeal of **MGNREGA** and issues with tax devolution.
- o Gehlot reportedly objected to key paragraphs and refused to read them.

Political reaction:

- o Chief Minister Siddaramaiah condemned the act as a **violation of Articles 176 and 163** of the Constitution and said the state government was **examining whether to approach the Supreme Court** over the governor’s conduct.

Reactions:

- o Chief Minister **M.K. Stalin** and the DMK condemned the walkout as *disrespectful to constitutional norms* and passed a resolution in the Assembly rejecting the governor’s action.

Kerala episode

Date & event:

- o On **20 January 2026**, Governor **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar** delivered the **policy address to the Kerala Legislative Assembly** at the start of the Budget session.
- o However, he **omitted and altered parts of the speech** that had been approved by the state cabinet.

Specific changes:

- o Portions critical of the Union government’s fiscal actions were left out.
- o Sections referring to prolonged pendency of bills and the state’s legal challenge in the Supreme Court were excluded.
- o A sentence on **tax devolution as a constitutional entitlement** was modified by adding the phrase “my government feels”.

State leadership’s response:

- o After the governor left, **Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan returned to the House** and **read out the omitted parts**, urging the Speaker to accept the **cabinet-approved version as the official record**.

Tamil Nadu

Date & event:


- o On **20 January 2026**, **R. N. Ravi**, Governor of Tamil Nadu, **walked out of the Assembly** without delivering the **customary inaugural address** at the opening of the first session of the year.
- o He has, for four consecutive years, declined to deliver the customary address.


Governor’s stated reasons:


- o The Raj Bhavan (governor’s office) said the speech

ROLE OF SPECIAL ADDRESS IN FEDERALISM

 **Strengthening Cooperative Federalism:** It institutionalizes communication between the executive and legislature, serving as a constitutional mechanism to convey policy priorities and legislative agenda to elected representatives and citizens.

 **Centre–State balance:** Since Governors are appointed by the Centre, controversies over the address often highlight tensions between the Union and opposition-ruled states, acting as a litmus test for federal balance.

 **Constitutional conventions:** Strictly, Governors have a *ceremonial and procedural role* in address delivery; any departure from presenting the cabinet-approved speech can be interpreted as undermining the elected government’s mandate, potentially skewing federal balance.

 **Expert commentary:** Constitutional experts emphasize that while some discretion exists, the Governor’s role is not independent policy making but facilitating constitutional communication.

CRITICISMS

- ▼ **Partisan interpretations:** Critics argue that Governors' actions are **increasingly viewed as ideologically motivated**, especially when speeches prepared by state cabinets contain sharp critiques of central policies; this blurs the line between constitutional duty and political contestation.
- ▼ **Open Institutional Confrontation:** While Governors may raise objections privately before sessions, **public refusal or walkouts convert constitutional disagreement into visible confrontation** between unelected and elected authorities.
- ▼ **Violation of conventions:** Failure to honour the traditional practice of reading the full address has been interpreted by some as *disrespect for constitutional norms*.
- ▼ **Erosion of trust:** Ongoing disputes weaken *institutional trust* between state governments and Governors, inviting legislative resolutions or legal challenges that detract from substantive governance priorities.
- ▼ **Undermining state mandate:** Altering, truncating, or refusing to deliver the cabinet-approved address is seen as **undermining the elected government's priorities and legislative intent**, threatening democratic norms within the federal structure.

WAY FORWARD

- * **Ensuring Constitutional Neutrality:** Governors should act **strictly as nominal heads of the State executive**, similar to the President at the Union level, respecting the powers of elected governments while maintaining constitutional obligations.
- * **Strengthening Pre-Session Consultation:** Differences over speech content should be resolved through closed-door consultations before the session, preserving institutional dignity.
- * **Consultation in Appointments :** Recommendations by the **Sarkaria and Punchhi Commissions** suggest consulting Chief Ministers before appointing Governors, reducing political friction and preventing confrontations.
- * **Codifying Conventions:** Clear institutional guidelines or amendments could codify the practice of the Governor's address, ensuring adherence to constitutional norms and reducing ambiguity.
- * **Judicial Oversight:** Timely judicial review of any deviations from established practices can reinforce constitutional principles and deter misuse of the Governor's discretionary powers.
- * **Strengthen federal dialogue:** Periodic dialogue between the Centre, state governments, and constitutional experts can maintain harmony, uphold federalism, and preserve the ceremonial sanctity of the Governor's address.

CONCLUSION

Although intended as a constitutional formality, the special address often becomes a touchstone for debates on federal balance and gubernatorial neutrality. Clear conventions, judicial guidance, and cooperative institutional mechanisms are essential to ensure that it strengthens federalism rather than generating political contention.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Analyse the significance of the Governor's special address in the context of India's federal structure **(10 marks) (150 words)**

STARTUP ECOSYSTEM IN INDIA

GS-III: Indian Economy

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Discuss the rationale of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. What are its achievements? In what way can the functioning and outcomes of the scheme be improved? (2025)

Q) Faster economic growth requires increased share of the manufacturing sector in GDP, particularly of MSMEs. Comment on the present policies of the Government in this regard (2023)

WHY IN NEWS

On National Startup Day (16 January), Uttarakhand was recognised as a leader in developing a robust startup ecosystem in the **5th edition of the States' Startup Ecosystem Ranking** released by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.

INTRODUCTION

India's startup ecosystem has emerged as a key driver of economic transformation, innovation and employment generation, positioning the country as the world's third-largest startup hub. Supported by a young demographic profile, digital public infrastructure and proactive government policies, startups are increasingly shaping India's growth narrative.

SHORT TAKES

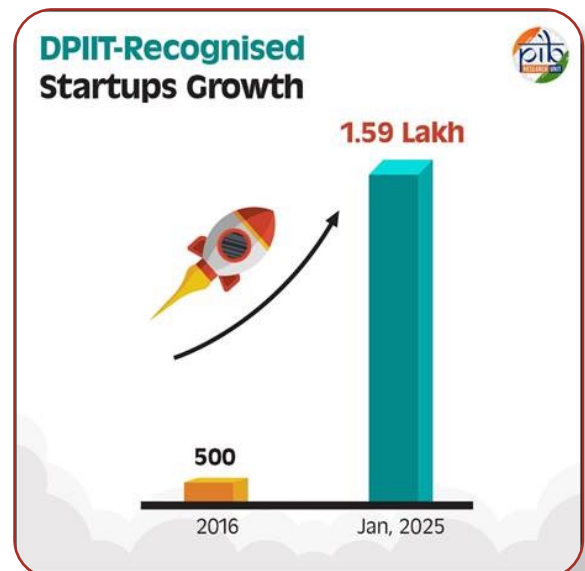
- **Startup20:** A G20 Engagement Group that provides a global platform for startups, investors, corporates, and policymakers to discuss challenges, share best practices, and recommend policies to strengthen and scale startup ecosystems worldwide.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR A STARTUP IN INDIA

- ✎ **Company Age:** The startup should be in existence and operations for **not more than 10 years** from the date of incorporation.
- ✎ **Company Type:** Must be incorporated as a **Private Limited Company, a Registered Partnership Firm, or a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)**.
- ✎ **Annual Turnover:** Should have an **annual turnover of ₹100 crore or less** in any financial year since incorporation.
- ✎ **Original Entity:** Should **not be formed by splitting up or reconstructing an existing business**.
- ✎ **Innovative & Scalable:** Must work towards **developing or improving a product, process, or service** and/or have a **scalable business model** with high potential for **wealth creation and employment generation**.

EVOLUTION OF STARTUP ECOSYSTEM IN INDIA

- ➔ **Early Phase (Pre-2010):** Entrepreneurial activity mainly centred around IT services, outsourcing and traditional small-scale businesses; limited structured support and recognition.
- ➔ **Emergence Phase (2010–2015):** Growth of incubators in technical institutes, mentorship forums and angel networks; foundational culture of entrepreneurship took shape.
- ➔ **Policy Push (2016 Onwards):**
 - The launch of the **Startup India Initiative in 2016** marked a decisive shift from fragmented entrepreneurship to a structured, policy-driven startup ecosystem.



KEY DRIVERS OF INDIA'S STARTUP GROWTH

- ☀️ **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** Widespread adoption of UPI, Aadhaar and low-cost data has enabled large-scale digital business models and financial inclusion.
- ☀️ **Demographic dividend:** India's young population has enabled a steady pipeline of entrepreneurs, innovators, and skilled workforce across technology, services, and manufacturing.
- ☀️ **Collaboration with corporates and MNCs:** Increasing partnerships between startups and large firms have facilitated technology transfer, scalability, and global market integration.
- ☀️ **Expanding domestic market:** Rising consumption, urbanisation, and demand for digital and service-

based solutions have enabled rapid scaling of startup models.

- ☀️ **Government Incentives:** Policy support through tax breaks, self-certification schemes, simplified compliance, and financial incentives encourages entrepreneurship.
- ☀️ **Technological Advancements:** High smartphone penetration, affordable internet, and 4G/5G networks support innovation in fintech, edtech, healthtech and more.
- ☀️ **Global Integration:** India's participation in global platforms like *Startup20* fosters international collaboration and investor confidence

CURRENT SCENARIO

- 👁️ **Scale & Recognition:**
 - o India became the **3rd-largest startup ecosystem globally**, with strong presence in technology, e-commerce, fintech, and social sectors.
 - o India now has **over 200,000 recognised startups**, a significant increase in recent years.
- 👁️ **Sectoral diversification:** Startups operate across agri-tech, fintech, health-tech, clean mobility, ed-tech, tourism, microfinance, and deep-tech sectors.
- 👁️ **Emergence of startup hubs:** Major hubs include **Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Delhi-NCR**, while smaller cities are increasingly contributing to ecosystem growth.
- 👁️ **Tier-II and Tier-III rise:** Nearly **50% of startups now originate from Tier-II and Tier-III cities**, reflecting the democratisation of entrepreneurship.
- 👁️ **High-value ecosystem growth:** India's unicorn landscape expanded from **4 billion-dollar firms in 2014** to **over 120 unicorns**, with a combined valuation exceeding **\$350 billion**.
- 👁️ **Inclusivity Patterns:** Over **45% of recognised startups** have at least one woman Director/Partner, highlighting inclusive and gender-balanced growth.
- 👁️ **Resilience Trends:** Recent trends show fewer closures with only about **729 shutdowns in 2025**, reflecting cautious scaling and ecosystem stability.

IMPORTANCE

- ☀️ **Economic Growth:** Startups contribute to GDP enhancement by fostering new industries and competitive markets.
- ☀️ **Employment generation:** Startups generate large-scale **direct employment** and significant **indirect jobs** through gig work, logistics, and supply chains.
- ☀️ **Innovation & Technology Advancement:** Indian startups are driving new solutions in fintech, edtech, healthtech and climate tech, fostering technological adoption.
 - o **Example:** Skyroot Aerospace is a leading Indian private space-tech startup that successfully pioneered private space launches in the country and is actively developing its Vikram series of launch vehicles.
- ☀️ **Financial Inclusion:** Digital payments and fintech innovations bring financial services to previously underserved populations.
- ☀️ **Social Impact:** Startups addressing education, agriculture and public service challenges contribute to social well-being and SDG attainment.
- ☀️ **Global Competitiveness:** Indian startups attract international investment, partnerships and global market access opportunities.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Startup India Initiative:

- o Led by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, Startup India supports startups from ideation to scale.
- o Offers tax exemptions, regulatory reforms, mentorship networks, and financial support.
- o **Impact:**
 - Platforms like *Hesa* improving farmer market access and rural–urban linkages
 - Startups like *Zypp* providing EV-based last-mile delivery

Ease of Doing Business Reforms:

- o Simplified compliance requirements, including self-certification schemes and single-window clearances, reduce regulatory burden.

Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS):

- o Supports SEBI-registered **Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)**, which in turn invest in startups, with the objective of expanding access to domestic risk capital and strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- o Corpus: **₹10,000 crore**, managed by SIDBI
- o **₹25,500+ crore invested in 1,370+ startups**

Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS):

- o Collateral-free loans to startups
- o Operationalized by the **National Credit Guarantee**

Trustee Company (NCGTC) Limited

- o **330+ loans** worth **over ₹800 crore** have been guaranteed for startup borrowers.

Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS):

- o ₹945 crore corpus; approved for **215+ incubators** to support early-stage startups from idea to commercialisation.

Startup India Hub:

- o Digital platform connecting startups with investors, mentors, incubators, corporates and government bodies.

States' Startup Ranking Framework (SRF):

- o Promotes competitive federalism by ranking states/UTs as Best Performers, Leaders, Aspiring Leaders and Emerging Ecosystems.

National Mentorship Portal (MAARG)

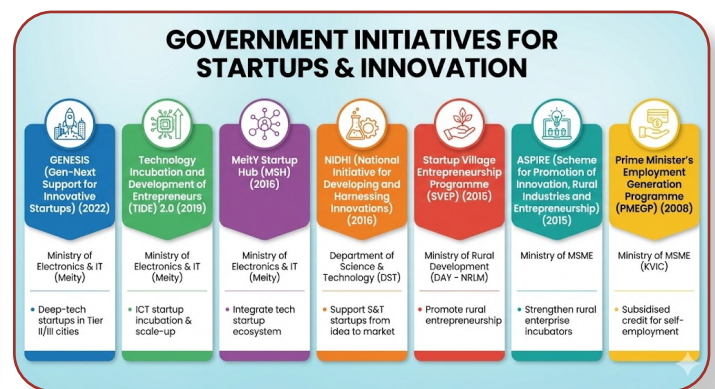
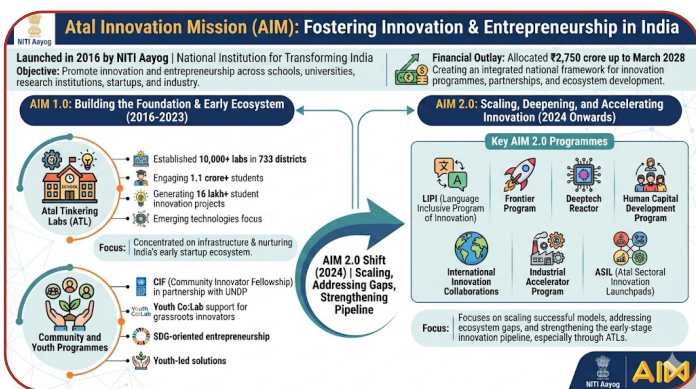
- o **Full form:** Mentorship, Advisory, Assistance, Resilience, and Growth
- o Aims to provide structured mentorship access nationwide

Startup India Investor Connect Portal:

- o SIDBI-backed platform enabling startups to pitch to multiple investors via a single interface.

Bharat Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR):

- o Connects startups, investors and mentors to promote collaboration and knowledge exchange.



CHALLENGES

- **Funding and Liquidity Crunch:** Startups often rely heavily on continuous investment to sustain growth, making them vulnerable to cash flow disruptions.
- **Regulatory & Compliance Issues:** Complex and evolving regulations such as data protection, taxation, and RBI guidelines create operational challenges for startups.
- **Talent Retention:** Competition for skilled talent and willingness of professionals to migrate abroad limits
- **Example:** The 28% GST on India's real-money gaming sector forced smaller startups like Quizy and Fantok to shut down, while larger platforms such as Dream11 and MPL had to absorb high tax costs.

talent availability for startups.

- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Inadequate physical and digital infrastructure in smaller cities hampers scaling potential.
- **Market Saturation & Competition:** High competition

in popular segments makes differentiation and customer acquisition difficult.

- **Sustainability Concerns:** Many startups struggle with long-term profitability and sustainable business models amidst rapid scaling pressure.

WAY FORWARD

- * **Strengthen Early-Stage Funding:** Expand seed funding networks and angel investor support to bridge funding gaps for new startups.
- * **Regulatory Clarity & Simplification:** Further reform regulatory processes with clearer guidelines for data privacy, taxation and industry-specific norms.
- * **Skilling and R&D Focus:** Align education and research ecosystems with startup needs; encourage deep-tech innovation through grants and scholarships
- * **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in broadband, incubation centres, affordable co-work spaces and supply chain support outside major cities.
- * **Promote Global Market Access:** Facilitate international partnerships, export-ready solutions and global acceleration programmes.
- * **Inclusive Growth:** Enhance outreach to women, rural and socially-disadvantaged entrepreneurs with targeted incentives and mentorship.
- * **Cluster Development:** Promote sectoral clusters (AI, biotech, climate tech) for knowledge sharing and collaborative innovation.

CONCLUSION

While India's startup ecosystem has achieved remarkable scale and diversity, challenges related to funding stability, regulation, infrastructure and sustainability persist. Addressing these through targeted reforms, innovation-led growth and inclusive support mechanisms will be crucial for startups to contribute meaningfully to *Viksit Bharat @2047*.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Critically examine the challenges faced by Indian startups in the current global economic environment. Suggest suitable measures to address them
(10 marks) (150 words)

WEEKLY DOSSIERS

INDIA AND THE GAZA BOARD OF PEACE: A STRATEGIC DILEMMA IN WEST ASIA

US President Donald Trump has invited PM Narendra Modi to join a proposed **Gaza Board of Peace** aimed at post-conflict governance and reconstruction. The board is **US-led**, endorsed in principle by the UNSC, but **outside a UN-led framework**. Membership may involve a **\$1 billion contribution for permanent seats**, with Trump as inaugural chair. India supports a **two-state solution**, humanitarian assistance, and regional stability in West Asia.

Arguments in Favour of India Joining

1. Strategic Influence and Voice

- ◆ Participation gives India **a seat at the table** in shaping Gaza's political and economic future.
- ◆ Prevents decisions being monopolised by Western or regional powers.

2. Economic and Reconstruction Opportunities

- ◆ Indian companies could secure **infrastructure, housing, healthcare and energy contracts**.
- ◆ Aligns with India's growing footprint in **post-conflict reconstruction**.

3. Diplomatic Signalling

- ◆ Reinforces India's image as a **responsible global stakeholder**.
- ◆ Strengthens ties with the US, GCC countries, and key West Asian partners.

4. Support for Palestinians

- ◆ Allows India to push for **humanitarian access, reconstruction aid, and stability** from within.
- ◆ Avoids complete disengagement from Gaza's future.

Arguments Against India Joining

1. Erosion of Strategic Autonomy

- ◆ A US-dominated board with veto powers risks turning India into a **policy follower**, not a shaper.
- ◆ Financial contributions tied to membership dilute independence.

2. Bypassing UN-Led Multilateralism

- ◆ Undermines India's consistent support for **UN-centric conflict resolution**.
- ◆ Sets a precedent for ad-hoc governance by powerful states.

3. Consent and Legitimacy Deficit

- ◆ Governance mechanisms without **explicit Palestinian consent** risk appearing as imposed trusteeship.
- ◆ May conflict with India's **anti-colonial ethos** and moral positioning.

4. Reputational Risks in the Global South

- ◆ Association with a controversial post-conflict arrangement could **weaken India's credibility** as a voice for justice and self-determination.

5. Policy Uncertainty

- ◆ Unclear future under a different US administration.
- ◆ Ambiguity over use and accountability of the \$1 billion contributions.

Way Forward

◆ Conditional Engagement

- Participate only if the board is aligned with **UN principles**, Palestinian consent, and international law.

◆ Observer or Limited Role

- Join as a non-executive member or through senior officials, not at the highest political level.

◆ UN-Channelled Assistance

- Prioritise humanitarian aid and reconstruction through **UN agencies and multilateral funds**.

◆ Maintain Strategic Autonomy

- Avoid financial or political commitments that constrain India's independent foreign policy.

◆ Parallel Diplomacy

- Continue bilateral engagement with Israel, Palestine, GCC states, and major powers to push for a durable two-state solution.

Conclusion

India should approach the proposed Gaza Board of Peace with **strategic caution and conditional engagement**. While participation could offer diplomatic influence, economic opportunities, and a platform to support Palestinian reconstruction, the risks to **strategic autonomy, multilateral credibility, and moral legitimacy** are significant—especially given the board's US-centric structure and its location outside a UN-led framework.

A PERILOUS PATH TOWARDS HIMALAYAN ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE

- ◆ **Climate stress in 2025:** Climate-related disasters have caused over 4,000 deaths, with extreme weather conditions persisting for nearly 331 days of the year.
- ◆ **Rapid Himalayan warming:** High-altitude Himalayan regions have been heating up nearly **50% faster than the global average** since 1950.
- ◆ **Char Dham project impact:** About **700 km of road expansion** has created **800+ active landslide-prone zones**.
- ◆ **Forest loss:** Clearance approved for nearly **7,000 Deodar trees** in the Dharali–Harsil belt.
- ◆ **Ecological sensitivity:** The **Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone (~4,000 sq km)** safeguards the Ganga’s last largely undisturbed stretch.

natural angle of repose, causing repeated slope failures.

- ◆ **Climate change as a risk multiplier**

- *Example:* Glacier retreat near Gangotri combined with cloudbursts leading to flash floods in areas like Dharali.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Region-specific infrastructure norms:** Adopt hill-sensitive road designs and construction methods rather than plains-oriented standards.
- ◆ **Robust environmental and geological scrutiny:** Enforce mandatory cumulative EIAs and independent geotechnical evaluations for all Himalayan projects.
- ◆ **Forest-centred disaster resilience:** Treat native forests as critical natural infrastructure for slope stabilisation and water regulation.
- ◆ **Effective implementation of NMSHE:** Ensure all development initiatives align with the **National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem**.
- ◆ **Carrying-capacity based governance:** Regulate tourism, transport, hydropower, and waste management in line with ecological limits.

Key Issues

- ◆ **Infrastructure push in fragile terrain**
 - *Example:* Use of **12-metre DL-PS road standards** north of the Main Central Thrust, despite extreme geological instability.
- ◆ **Deforestation intensifying disaster vulnerability**
 - *Example:* Loss of Deodar forests in Uttarkashi and Chamoli weakening slope stability and raising landslide and avalanche risks.
- ◆ **Weakening of environmental safeguards**
 - *Example:* Splitting large projects into smaller components to avoid comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).
- ◆ **Disregard for geotechnical principles**
 - *Example:* Vertical hill-cutting that ignores the

Conclusion

Unchecked, infrastructure-led development in the Himalayas risks triggering an irreversible ecological breakdown. Balancing connectivity and growth with scientific planning, ecological sensitivity, and climate resilience is no longer optional—it is essential to prevent the Himalayas from becoming the epicentre of a human-induced ecocide.

SUPREME COURT QUESTION THE LEGAL BASIS OF THE SIR

The Supreme Court raised serious concerns over the Election Commission’s justification for undertaking the **Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in 2025**, particularly the implied linkage with citizenship verification.

Key Grounds for the Court’s Intervention

- ◆ **SIR notification cited migration, not illegal immigration**
 - The official notification referred to **rapid urbanisation and frequent migration** as reasons

for the SIR.

- It made **no explicit reference** to illegal or cross-border immigration.
- The Court observed that *migration* ordinarily implies **lawful movement**, especially inter-State mobility.
- ◆ **Legal distinction between migration and illegal immigration**
 - **Migration (inter-State):**

- Protected under **Articles 19(1)(d) and 19(1)(e)** of the Constitution.
- Citizens have the right to move freely and reside anywhere in India.
- **Illegal immigration:**
 - Refers to unlawful cross-border entry.
 - Became a distinct legal category only after the **Citizenship Act amendment of 2003**.
- The Court stressed that legality cannot be presumed merely from the use of the term “migration”.
- ◆ **Citizenship verification not expressly invoked**
 - The Election Commission relied on:
 - **Article 326** (citizenship as a qualification for voting), and
 - **Article 324** (EC’s powers to conduct free and fair elections).
 - However, the Court held that if citizenship scrutiny due to illegal immigration was the real objective, it should have been **clearly and unambiguously stated** in the SIR notification.
 - The lack of such clarity suggested a **post-facto justification**.
- ◆ **Retrospective reliance on the 2003 Citizenship Act amendment**
 - The EC invoked the **2003 amendment**, which tightened citizenship norms and introduced the concept of “illegal immigrant”.
 - The Court noted that this provision had **not been actively applied to electoral roll revisions for over two decades**.
 - Suddenly invoking it in 2025, without explicit prior notice, creates **legal uncertainty**.
- ◆ **Potential infringement of constitutional rights**
 - Mass deletions from electoral rolls and notices seeking proof of citizenship directly impact the **right to vote under Article 326**.
 - The Court cautioned that any administrative exercise affecting citizenship must be **explicit, transparent, and narrowly tailored**, given its serious constitutional consequences.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court’s scrutiny highlights that administrative convenience cannot override constitutional clarity. By relying on vague references to “migration” while implicitly invoking citizenship verification, the SIR risked blurring the line between lawful mobility and illegal immigration. The Court’s intervention underscores the need for **clear legal foundations, transparent intent, and strict protection of voting rights** in any electoral roll revision exercise.

BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

Supreme Court Recognises Menstrual Health as a Fundamental Right and Directs Free Sanitary Pads in Schools

- ◆ In *Dr. Jaya Thakur v. Government of India & Ors. (W.P.)*, the Supreme Court declared that **menstrual health is part of the right to life under Article 21**, emphasizing that lack of safe and hygienic menstrual management undermines the dignity of adolescent girls.
- ◆ The Court directed that all schools, whether government or private, provide **free biodegradable sanitary pads**, maintain **functional gender-segregated toilets**, and establish **menstrual hygiene management corners** equipped with necessary materials and safe disposal mechanisms.
- ◆ It highlighted that inadequate access to menstrual hygiene perpetuates **gendered disadvantage**, impacts education, and violates rights under Articles 14, 21, and 21A, including the right to equality, dignity, and education.

Supreme Court Lauds Kerala High Court’s Indigenous Case Management System

- ◆ The Supreme Court appreciated the **Kerala High Court’s Case Management System (CMS)**, noting that it was developed **in-house without outsourcing** and has set a benchmark for automation and paperless functioning in Indian courts.
- ◆ A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta highlighted that the system manages the **entire case flow**

from filing to order uploading, providing dashboards for judges, advocates, parties, and government counsel, while ensuring **transparency, accessibility, and interoperability**.

- ◆ The High Court's initiative includes **AI tools for transcribing witness statements** and allows remote access to stakeholders, enhancing participation in the justice system. The Court emphasized that while the Union could develop a centralized software, Kerala's in-house innovation demonstrates **effective local solutions using indigenous expertise**, backed by a specialized IT team hired in 2019.

Supreme Court Emphasises Clear Grounds and Evidence for Demolition of Private Property

- ◆ In **M/s Aarsuday Projects & Infrastructure (P) Ltd v. Jogen Chowdhury & Ors.**, the Supreme Court held that any demolition of private property under **Article 300-A** must be based on **clear statutory grounds and site-specific evidence**.
- ◆ The Court set aside the Calcutta High Court's order to demolish a residential building in Santiniketan, noting that the High Court relied on conjecture rather than **scientific verification** to assert that the construction was on ecologically sensitive "khoai" land.
- ◆ The bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta emphasized that **public interest litigation cannot be founded on mere assumptions** and that due consideration of all factual and legal circumstances is essential before interfering with private property.
- ◆ The Court observed that adjacent plots had "khoai" formations, but no conclusive evidence established that the disputed plot was similarly affected, rendering the demolition order legally unsustainable.

Supreme Court Urges States to Consider Minimum Wages for Domestic Workers

- ◆ In **Penn Thozhilalargal Sangam & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors.**, the Supreme Court highlighted the need for **minimum wages and social security protections for domestic workers**, observing that their exclusion from the **Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (now Code on Wages, 2019)** leads to exploitation, forced labour, and violation of **Articles 21 and 23**.
- ◆ While the Court did not issue a direct directive, it urged **State Governments to evolve suitable mechanisms** to ensure fair wages and prevent exploitation. The bench emphasized that domestic work is undervalued, often unpaid, and that workers' wages are arbitrarily determined by employers, necessitating legal safeguards and consultation with representative unions to protect their rights.

Supreme Court Stresses Functional CCTV Monitoring in Police Stations

- ◆ In the suo-motu case **"In Re Lack of Functional CCTVs in Police Stations"** and related proceedings including **Paramvir Singh Saini v. Baljit Singh**, the Supreme Court emphasized that **mere installation of CCTVs in police stations is insufficient; they must function properly and be regularly monitored**.
- ◆ The bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta highlighted issues such as connectivity, maintenance, data storage, and oversight, and called for adoption of **best practices from model states** like Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, and Rajasthan.
- ◆ The Court suggested **centralized dashboards and independent monitoring** to ensure accountability, noting that many cameras remain defunct or can be switched off by officials.
- ◆ States were urged to file proper compliance affidavits, and the Court warned of **strictures for non-compliance**, reinforcing that CCTV functionality is critical to transparency, accountability, and preventing custodial deaths.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are the Municipal Commissioner of Gokul City. A new urban mobility project such as footpaths, bus stops, and metro stations, is almost complete. On inspection, you notice that several facilities lack accessibility for persons with disabilities, despite legal requirements under the RPwD Act, 2016. Contractors claim fixing it now will increase costs and delay inauguration. Senior officials suggest minor gaps can be corrected later. Disability rights groups warn that the project, as it stands, excludes vulnerable citizens, while the government wants an early inauguration before local elections. As Municipal Commissioner, you must decide whether to prioritize timely completion or ensure inclusivity, balancing legal, ethical, and social responsibilities.

Questions

- a. Identify the ethical issues present in this case.
- b. Who are the key stakeholders, and what are their interests?
- c. What course of action would you take as Municipal Commissioner, and how would your decision reflect ethical and constitutional values?

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Accountability:** Swasthya Sewa Dapoon, led by J.V.N. Subramanyam, IAS, is Assam's in-house Management Information System–Geographic Information System (MIS-GIS) health platform, integrating HR, ASHA performance, maternal-infant tracking, and inventory monitoring for real-time decision-making. It has improved service delivery, reduced maternal and infant mortality, and created a scalable model for digital health governance.
2. **Empowerment:** Sristi Bose's Project Ecosanitation has reached 355 girls and women across seven states, improving menstrual hygiene awareness, confidence, and school attendance, while distributing biodegradable hemp-cotton pads and training women in small-scale production for livelihoods.
3. **Resilience:** Vinayana Khurana, born with cerebral palsy, learned to type with her nose and later dictate to her mother, earning a master's and M.Phil in English Literature from Delhi University. She is now an author, poet, disability rights activist, life coach, and guest teacher, with her work featured on Lok Sabha TV and at UNICEF events.
4. **Altruism:** Selvakumar, known as 'Tailor Bro,' began training women in tailoring for just Re 1 after losing his sister to poverty, aiming to ensure no woman is forced into despair due to financial hardship. Over 18 years, he has trained over 4.6 lakh people through in-person classes and his YouTube channel, helping thousands start their own businesses and achieve financial independence across Tamil Nadu.
5. **Social Justice:** 20-year-old Karan Kumar's Finobadi has provided dignified work for over 70 waste collectors, processed 450 tonnes of waste, and planted 3,318 trees between 2023 and 2025. Using digital tools, worker training, and responsible recycling, it has improved livelihoods and promoted environmental sustainability across Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon, and Samastipur.
6. **Gender Discrimination:** After the Baramati plane crash that killed Maharashtra deputy CM Ajit Pawar and four others, co-pilot Captain Shambhavi Pathak faced widespread sexist trolling on social media, with users blaming her for the crash due to her gender, even as the official investigation continues.
7. **Lack of Honesty:** 20-year-old Suraj Bhaskar from Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, allegedly self-amputated his foot to avail the MBBS disability quota after failing NEET twice, later staging it as an assault. Police recovered his diary declaring his aim to become a doctor in 2026 and found multiple inconsistencies in his account.
8. **Leadership:** CRPF Assistant Commandant Simran Bala from Rajouri, Jammu and Kashmir, made history by commanding an all-male contingent of 147 personnel at the 2026 Republic Day parade in New Delhi, becoming the first woman officer to lead a full male squad at the event.

MODEL ESSAY

"He is richest who is content with the least, for content is the wealth of nature"

Introduction

- Quote by ancient Greek philosopher Socrates
- Emphasises that *true wealth lies in inner satisfaction, not material accumulation.*

Importance of Contentment

- **Mental Health Benefits:** Contentment reduces chronic stress, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy driven by social comparison.
- **Emotional Stability:** Satisfaction rooted in internal values is more stable than happiness tied to external achievements.
- **Financial Security through Simplicity:** Fewer wants translate into lower expenses, higher savings, and reduced debt.
- **Ethical Consumption:** Contentment discourages exploitative practices rooted in overproduction and overconsumption.

Social and Environmental Implications

- **Environmental Sustainability:** Reduced consumption lowers resource extraction, waste generation, and carbon emissions.
- **Intergenerational Justice:** Living within limits preserves resources for future generations.
- **Reduction of Inequality:** Limiting excessive accumulation helps curb wealth concentration and social disparities.
- **Social Harmony:** Contentment reduces status competition, envy, and conflict within societies.

Challenges

- **Growth-Driven Capitalism:** Modern economies depend on perpetual dissatisfaction to sustain demand.
- **Manufactured Desire:** Advertising industries actively create insecurity and perceived inadequacy. **Eg:** In the 1920s, **Lambert Pharmacal Company popularised the term "halitosis"**, reframing bad breath as a **shameful**

medical condition to market Listerine.

- **Planned Obsolescence:** Products are designed to fail, discouraging contentment with durable goods.
- **Social Media Amplification:** Platforms intensify comparison, making satisfaction increasingly difficult.
- **Complacency Argument:** Critics warn that excessive contentment could weaken ambition and innovation.

Way Forward

- **Balanced Contentment:** Being satisfied with possessions while striving to improve skills and society.
- **Minimalist Lifestyles:** Intentional reduction of material clutter to focus on meaning.
- **Policy Innovation:** Bhutan's **Gross National Happiness** model prioritises well-being over output.
- **Educational Reform:** Teaching emotional intelligence, ethics, and financial literacy.
- **Cultural Reorientation:** Shifting values from consumption to sufficiency.

Conclusion

- Contentment is essential for sustainability, equity, and mental well-being.
- In a finite world, the richest individual is the one that has learned the art of enough.

Sample Quotes

- *The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good - Samuel Johnson*
- *Gray skies are just clouds passing over - Duke Ellington*
- *Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen - Winston Churchill*

MAINS JOT DOWN



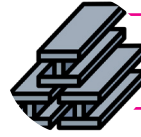
GS III: POLLUTION

- The **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)**, in a report prepared pursuant to a **Supreme Court direction in the M.C. Mehta vs Union of India case**, identified **secondary particulate matter** as the single largest contributor to Delhi's winter air pollution, accounting for about **27%**.
- These fine particles are formed in the atmosphere through chemical reactions involving precursor gases such as **SO₂, NO_x, NH₃ and VOCs**, leading to aerosols like ammonium sulphate and ammonium nitrate.
- Among primary sources, **transport emissions** contribute the most at **23%**, followed by **biomass burning (20%)**, **dust from roads, soil and construction activities (15%)**, and **industries including thermal power plants (9%)**.
- The report also notes a **gradual decline and stabilisation in PM2.5 and PM10 levels** in Delhi since 2016.



GS- III - ENERGY

- NITI Aayog has released a report titled **"Enhancing Circular Economy of End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs) in India"**, highlighting the growing challenge and opportunity in managing vehicular waste sustainably.
- **End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs)** are those that are no longer validly registered, have been declared unfit by a competent authority, or are voluntarily scrapped by their owners.
- The report underscores the urgency of action as India's ELV burden is projected to **double from about 23 million vehicles in 2025 to nearly 50 million by 2030**, making a circular economy approach critical for resource efficiency, environmental protection, and industrial growth.



GS- III - INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Indian Railways has deployed a humanoid robot, ASC ARJUN, at Visakhapatnam Railway Station in Andhra Pradesh** to strengthen passenger safety, security, and service delivery. The robot is designed to **assist Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel** by acting as a smart surveillance and communication support system.
- **ASC ARJUN** is equipped with a **Face Recognition System (FRS)** for intrusion detection, **AI-based crowd monitoring**, and the ability to send **real-time alerts** to RPF control rooms.
- It can also make **automated public announcements in English, Hindi, and Telugu**, helping guide passengers and raise awareness on safety and security-related issues.



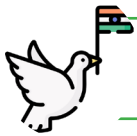
GS- III - DEFENCE

- DRDO showcased the **Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile (LR-AShM)** at the **77th Republic Day parade**, marking a major milestone in India's hypersonic weapons capability. LR-AShM is **India's first long-range hypersonic glide missile**, developed to meet the **coastal defence and strike requirements of the Indian Navy**. It has an **estimated range of about 1,500 km** and is capable of engaging **both static and moving maritime targets** with high precision using **indigenous avionics and advanced sensors**.
- The missile follows a **quasi-ballistic trajectory**, reaching **peak speeds of around Mach 10** and sustaining an **average speed of Mach 5** through manoeuvring "skipping" flight profiles. It is powered by a **two-stage solid propulsion system**, after which it executes an **unpowered hypersonic glide** with high manoeuvrability. Flying at **very high speeds and relatively low altitudes**, LR-AShM is designed to **evade radar detection**, significantly enhancing India's maritime strike and deterrence capabilities.



GS- III - EMPLOYMENT

- Karnataka has constituted the **Gig Workers' Welfare Board** under the **Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare Development) Act, 2025** to strengthen social security for platform workers.
- The **Labour Minister serves as the ex-officio Chairperson**, and the Board includes representatives from **gig workers' unions as well as aggregator platforms**.
- It is responsible for **mandatory registration of aggregators and gig workers** and for issuing **unique identification numbers** to enrolled workers, enabling access to welfare and social security measures.



GS- I - IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES IN NEWS

- The Government observes **Parakram Diwas on 23 January** to mark the **129th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**, a towering Indian nationalist who firmly believed in achieving **complete independence from British rule**.
- He served as **President of the Indian National Congress in 1938 and 1939**, but later resigned due to ideological differences. Bose contributed to the freedom movement through journalism, writing for **Chittaranjan Das's newspaper Forward** and launching **Swaraj** to spread nationalist ideas.
- After a dramatic escape from British house arrest in 1941, he sought international support from **Germany and Japan during World War II**. From 1943, he led the **Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj)**, which fought alongside Japanese forces against the British in **northeast India and Burma**, and established the **Provisional Government of Free India in Imphal, Manipur**, to mobilise Indians for an armed anti-colonial struggle.

- The **President of India paid homage to Veer Surendra Sai on his birth anniversary**, recognising his role as a pioneering freedom fighter from Odisha.
- **Veer Surendra Sai (1809–1884)** was born in **Rajpur-Khinda village near Sambalpur** into the **Chauhan royal family** and emerged as a prominent **tribal and regional resistance leader** against British rule.
- He began opposing British dominance as early as **1827**, at the age of 18, and organised a **guerrilla-style uprising** with the support of tribal communities such as the **Binjhal and Gond**.
- After the British annexed Sambalpur in **1849** under the **Doctrine of Lapse**, denying his legitimate claim to succession, Sai intensified his resistance.
- During the **Revolt of 1857**, he returned to Sambalpur and revived the rebellion, drawing support from **tribal zamindars and gauntias**, thereby sustaining armed resistance against colonial authority in western Odisha.



GS II: GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS

- The **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)** campaign, launched in **2015**, has completed **11 years**. It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** implemented under the **Sambal vertical of Mission Shakti** and is jointly executed by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ministry of Education**, with later participation from the **Ministries of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Minority Affairs**.

→ The scheme aims to **improve the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)**, ensure **95% or more institutional deliveries**, raise **girls' secondary education enrolment and skilling by 1% annually**, and achieve a **1% yearly increase in first-trimester ANC registration**.

→ Notably, the **national SRB improved from 918 in 2014–15 to 930 in 2023–24**, while **institutional deliveries rose sharply from 61% to 97.3%** during the same period.

→ The **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** has constituted the **Strategic Asset Allocation and Risk Governance (SAARG) Committee** to strengthen the investment framework of the **National Pension System (NPS)**.

→ The committee aims to support **long-term retirement wealth creation** by improving **asset diversification**, strengthening **risk management practices**, and **expanding investment choices** available to NPS subscribers.

→ The Prime Minister has launched the **PM SVANidhi Credit Card** to strengthen financial inclusion for street vendors by providing easier access to formal credit.

→ Eligible beneficiaries include street vendors who have successfully repaid the second tranche of their PM SVANidhi loan and qualify for the third tranche.

→ The card is issued as a **RuPay retail (personal) credit card** with a **₹30,000 revolving credit limit**, allowing vendors to meet recurring working capital needs with greater flexibility.

→ The initiative builds upon the **PM SVANidhi Scheme**, a **Central Sector Scheme launched in 2020** to provide **collateral-free, affordable working capital loans** to street vendors affected by COVID-19 disruptions. The scheme is jointly implemented by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** and the **Department of Financial Services (DFS)**.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

EXOMINER++

- It is a **NASA-developed deep learning software** used for the detection and validation of **exoplanets**. It analyses observational data from the **Kepler** and **Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS)** missions by examining stellar **light curves** to identify characteristic dips in brightness caused when a planet transits in front of its host star.

SONIC BOOM

- It is a loud explosive sound produced when an aircraft or any object **travels faster than the speed of sound**. As the object moves at supersonic speed, it generates **shock waves** that compress air molecules; when these waves reach the ground, they are heard as a sudden boom.
- Sonic booms are **most commonly associated with supersonic aircraft**, but they can also occur due to certain **natural phenomena** such as **meteor entries into the atmosphere, volcanic eruptions, and seismic events like earthquakes**.

EURATOM

- **The European Atomic Energy Community** was established under the **Treaty of Rome (1957)** to promote the **peaceful use of nuclear energy** within Europe. Its objectives include **encouraging nuclear research and cooperation**, facilitating the **sharing of technical expertise**, and **ensuring safeguards** to prevent the diversion of civilian nuclear material for military purposes.

DEUTERON

- It is the nucleus of **deuterium**, a stable isotope of hydrogen, consisting of **one proton and one neutron** held together by the **strong nuclear force**. It is represented by the symbol **^2H or D** , carries a **net positive charge of +1**, and has a mass roughly **twice that of a proton**.
- Deuterons are important in **nuclear fusion reactions** and are also used to produce **neutrons** for applications such as **cancer treatment and neutron radiotherapy**.

SUPERCAPACITORS

- They are electrochemical energy-storage devices that store electric charge mainly through **electrostatic mechanisms** rather than chemical reactions. They consist of **two electrodes (anode and cathode)**, an **electrolyte**, and a **separator**. By using electrode materials with **very high specific surface area** and **ultra-thin dielectric layers**, supercapacitors achieve **much higher capacitance** than conventional capacitors.