

# FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> INDIA – MYANMAR RELATIONS > KURUKSHETHRA-FEBRUARY > DAM REHABILITATION

25<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2025 - 31<sup>st</sup> MAY, 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. Cherry-picks 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**  
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# DAM REHABILITATION

*Syllabus: GS III - Infrastructure*

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q)** Dam failures are always catastrophic, especially on the downstream side, resulting in a colossal loss of life and property. Analyze the various causes of dam failures. Give two examples of large dam failures. (2023)

## WHY IN NEWS

A recent PIB explainer has highlighted **“Dam Rehabilitation: Strengthening Infrastructure through Policy and Technology”**, emphasizing India’s need to upgrade its ageing dam infrastructure for long-term water security and disaster resilience.

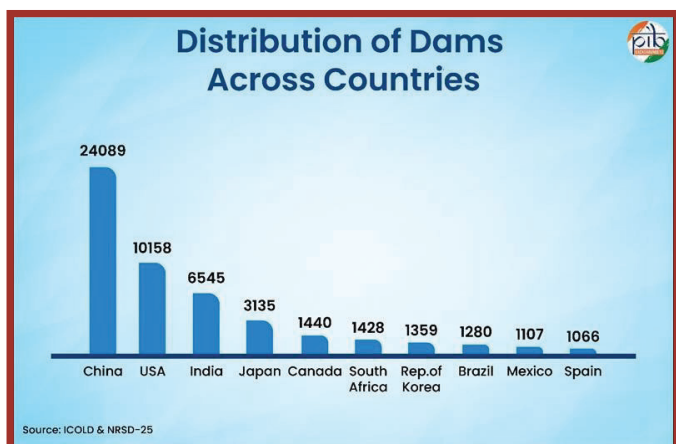
## INTRODUCTION

India, with **6,628 specified dams**, is the third largest dam-owning country in the world, playing a critical role in irrigation, hydropower generation, flood control, and water security. However, the increasing age of dams and rising climate variability have made dam safety, rehabilitation, and modernisation a key policy priority.

## SHORT TAKES

- **Dam owners:** Means the union government or a state government or jointly by one or more governments or public sector undertakings or local authority or company and any or all of such persons or organisations, who own, control, operate, or maintain a specified dam.

## STATUS OF DAMS



storage, supporting irrigation, hydropower, drinking water supply, and flood moderation.

- ➔ **Ownership pattern:** About **98.5% (6,448 dams)** are owned by State Governments, while the rest are with Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs), Central Government, and private entities.
- ➔ **Regional concentration:** States such as **Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha** have the highest number of dams.
- ➔ **Age distribution:** Around **42% of dams are in the 25–50 years age group**, indicating a large infrastructure cohort approaching advanced ageing.
  - **Example-** The **Kallanai (Grand Anicut)** in **Tamil Nadu**, nearly **2,000 years old**, highlights India’s long tradition of dam engineering.

- ➔ **Large dam base:** India has **6,628 specified dams**, ranking **3rd globally**, with **6,545 operational dams** and **83 under construction dams**.
- ➔ **Storage capacity significance:** These dams provide around **330 billion cubic metres (BCM)** of water

## CHALLENGES FACED BY DAM INFRASTRUCTURE

- ▼ **Ageing infrastructure:** Around **26% (1,681 dams)** are more than **50 years old**, and **291 dams are over 100 years old**, increasing structural risk and vulnerability.
- ▼ **Sedimentation issue:** Central Water Commission (CWC) data shows an average **19% loss of reservoir storage capacity**, mainly due to silt deposition.
- ▼ **Climate variability:** Increasing frequency of **extreme rainfall events, floods, and droughts** is stressing traditional dam design assumptions.
- ▼ **Safety risks:** Ageing spillways, gates, and embankments raise the risk of **dam failure and downstream disasters**.
- ▼ **Maintenance gaps:** Uneven capacity and funding across states lead to **inconsistent maintenance and safety standards**.

## DAM REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (DRIP)

- ✎ **Flagship initiative:** The **Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Programme (DRIP)** is a national initiative aimed at improving **dam safety, rehabilitation, and performance enhancement**.
- ✎ **Modernisation focus:** Includes **spillway upgrades, gate automation, instrumentation systems, and digital monitoring integration**.
- ✎ **Phase I (2012–2021):**
  - Supported by the **World Bank**, it covered **223 dams across 7 states**, focusing on structural safety and institutional strengthening.
- Rehabilitation works were awarded for **144 dams**, with comprehensive safety assessments completed for all **223 dams**.
- ✎ **Phase II and III (2021 onwards):**
  - Expanded to **736 dams across 19 states and 3 central agencies**, with a total outlay of **₹10,211 crore**.
- ✎ **Financial progress:** As of March 2025, **₹2,225 crore expenditure** has been incurred, and **191 rehabilitation proposals worth ₹5,053 crore** have been approved.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### Dam Safety Act, 2021

- ✎ **Legal framework:** The **Dam Safety Act, 2021 (enforced from 30 December 2021)** provides a national framework for **inspection, surveillance, operation, and maintenance of specified dams**.
- ✎ **Scope of coverage:** Applies to dams above **15 metres height or 10–15 metres if meeting technical criteria**, ensuring wide coverage of risk-prone structures.
- ✎ **Four-tier institutional system:** Includes the
  - **National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS),**
  - **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA),**
  - **State Committees on Dam Safety (SCDS),**
  - **State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs).**
- ✎ **Mandatory safety requirements:** Includes **Emergency Action Plans (EAPs), Operation and Maintenance (O&M) manuals, risk assessments and early warning systems**.
- ✎ **Inspection and monitoring system:** Around **13,000 inspections annually** are conducted, supported by classification-based safety evaluation.

## REMEDIAL MEASURES

- ✎ **DHARMA platform:**
  - The **Dam Health and Rehabilitation Monitoring Application (DHARMA)** enables real-time monitoring, inspection tracking, and centralized dam safety data management.
  - All **6,628 dams are registered on the DHARMA platform**.
- ✎ **Early Warning Systems (EWS):**
  - Used for **flood forecasting and dam breach alerts**, improving downstream disaster preparedness and response.
- ✎ **Instrumentation systems:**
  - Sensors and monitoring tools enable **structural health monitoring, seepage detection, and stress analysis of dams**.
- ✎ **Risk screening tools:**
  - The **Rapid Risk Screening system** has completed assessment of **5,553 dams**, enabling vulnerability classification.
- ✎ **Centres of Excellence (CoEs):**
  - Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee – seismic hazard mapping and reservoir sedimentation studies
  - Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru – risk assessment and advanced rehabilitation techniques
- ✎ **Capacity building initiatives:**
  - Includes **Master of Technology (M.Tech) programmes in dam safety** and establishment of **National Centre for Earthquake Safety of Dams at MNIT Jaipur**.

### WAY FORWARD

- \* **Lifecycle-based dam management:** Shift from construction-centric approach to **continuous monitoring, maintenance, and rehabilitation of ageing dams.**
- \* **Climate-resilient infrastructure:** Update dam design standards to incorporate **climate change impacts, extreme rainfall, and hydrological variability.**
- \* **Advanced digitalisation:** Expand use of **artificial intelligence (AI), predictive analytics, and real-time monitoring systems** for proactive dam safety management.
- \* **Institutional coordination:** Strengthen cooperation among **Central Government, State Governments, State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs), and dam owners.**
- \* **Financial sustainability:** Establish **dedicated maintenance funds and risk-based funding mechanisms** for long-term dam safety.

### CONCLUSION

India's dam safety ecosystem is evolving through a combination of **large-scale rehabilitation programmes, strong legal frameworks, and digital governance tools.** Sustained focus on modernization, climate resilience, and institutional coordination is essential to ensure the long-term safety and efficiency of this critical infrastructure.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** "Ageing dams pose a significant risk to India's water security and disaster resilience." Discuss in the context of recent dam safety initiatives. **(10 marks) (150 words)**

# INDIA - MYANMAR RELATIONS

*Syllabus: GS II - International Relations*

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q)** Cross-border movement of insurgents is only one of the several security challenges facing the policing of the border in North-East India. Examine the various challenges currently emanating across the India-Myanmar border. Also, discuss the steps to counter the challenges. (2019)

## WHY IN NEWS

Myanmar's President U Min Aung Hlaing made his **first official visit to India** from 30 May to 3 June 2026, reflecting the new administration's intent to strengthen ties with a key regional partner.

## INTRODUCTION

India and Myanmar share deep civilizational linkages and a strategically significant border, making Myanmar central to India's Act East Policy and regional connectivity vision. In contemporary times, the relationship is shaped by a mix of development cooperation, security challenges, and Myanmar's internal political instability.

## SHORT TAKES

- ✦ **Neighbourhood First Policy:** India's policy launched in **2014** prioritises immediate neighbours through **connectivity, development assistance, asymmetric support, and security cooperation** to ensure regional stability.
- ✦ **Act East Policy:** Announced in **2014**, it focuses on strengthening engagement with **ASEAN and East Asia** through **economic, strategic, defence, and connectivity cooperation**, with Northeast India as a key link.
- ✦ **MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) Vision :** Announced by PM Modi in Mauritius in 2025, it upgrades the 2015 SAGAR doctrine into a broader framework, extending India's maritime focus from the Indian Ocean to the wider Global South through trade, capacity building, and security cooperation.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT

- ♣ **Balancing China's influence:** Myanmar is seeking to diversify away from China amid concerns over **Beijing's simultaneous engagement with the regime and ethnic groups**.
- ♣ **Border security concerns:** Instability in Rakhine and adjoining regions has direct implications for **India's Northeast security and connectivity projects** under the Act East Policy.
- ♣ **Economic compulsions:** Severe economic distress such as high inflation, low growth, and widespread poverty is pushing Myanmar toward greater external engagement.

## OUTCOMES OF RECENT BILATERAL TALKS

- ☀ **Policy Alignment:** Myanmar was reaffirmed as a key partner under India's **Neighbourhood First, Act East and MAHASAGAR** frameworks.
- ☀ **Sectoral Cooperation:** Expanded cooperation agreed in agriculture, agro-processing, energy, petroleum, mining, construction, IT, and logistics.
- ☀ **Connectivity Projects:** Both sides reiterated commitment to expedite the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project** and the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway**.
- ☀ **Education and Scholarships:** India increased **ICCR Mekong-Ganga scholarships** for Myanmar students from **36 to 100 annually from 2026**.
- ☀ **Trade and Financial Cooperation:** Agreement to deepen trade, including stronger use of the **Rupee-Kyat settlement mechanism**, which has shown rising transactions since May 2024.
- ☀ **Security Cooperation:** Both sides reaffirmed **commitment to prevent use of territory for hostile activities** and to strengthen border management and security cooperation.

## HISTORY OF RELATIONS

- 🔗 **Colonial Integration & Separation (19th–1937):** Burma was annexed into British India, triggering large-scale migration of Indians; it was separated in **1937** as a crown colony.
- 🔗 **Post-Independence Camaraderie (1948–1962):** Close ties under **Nehru–U Nu**, marked by the **1951 Treaty of Friendship** and cooperation in the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**.
- 🔗 **Isolationist Phase (1962–1990s):** Following the **1962 coup by General Ne Win**, Myanmar adopted the “Burmese Way to Socialism,” expelling large

numbers of Indians, nationalising assets, and causing a prolonged diplomatic freeze.

- 🔗 **Look East Pragmatism (1990s–2014):** India re-engaged Myanmar to counter insurgency and China’s influence, balancing democracy support with ties to the military regime.
- 🔗 **Act East & Strategic Balancing (2014–Present):** Under **Act East Policy**, India advanced projects like the **Kaladan Multimodal Project** and, post-**2021 coup**, maintained cautious engagement while managing China’s influence and border instability.

## AREAS OF COOPERATION

- 🔗 **Strategic Importance:** Myanmar is a key gateway for India’s access to Southeast Asia and its location makes it vital for India’s Indo-Pacific strategy.
- 🔗 **Defence and Security Cooperation:** Both countries cooperate to counter insurgency and maintain border stability with regular military exchanges like **IMBAX** (India-Myanmar Bilateral Army Exercise)
  - o **Example-** India handed over its first-ever submarine, the **INS Sindhuvir**, to the Myanmar Navy in 2020.
- 🔗 **Counter-Insurgency Efforts:** India and Myanmar coordinate against insurgent groups operating in border areas which helps reduce violence in India’s Northeastern states.
  - o **Example- Operation Sunrise (2019)** was a joint India–Myanmar counter-insurgency operation targeting militant camps along the **1,643 km Indo-Myanmar border**.
- 🔗 **Connectivity Projects:**
  - o The Kaladan project connects India’s Northeast to Myanmar’s Sittwe port.
  - o The Trilateral Highway links India, Myanmar, and

Thailand for regional integration.

- 🔗 **Trade and Economic Relations:** India and Myanmar engage in bilateral trade in goods such as pulses and pharmaceuticals, which has grown steadily to about **USD 1.95 billion in FY 2025–26**.
- 🔗 **Energy Cooperation:** Both countries cooperate in oil and gas exploration and supply.
  - o **Example-** Indian public sector units like ONGC Videsh Ltd and GAIL, hold stakes in Myanmar’s offshore **Shwe Gas Project in the Andaman Sea**.
- 🔗 **Development Assistance:** India provides infrastructure support and humanitarian aid to Myanmar.
  - o **Example-** India launched ‘**Operation Karuna**’ (2023) to assist Myanmar which has been devastated by Cyclone Mocha.
- 🔗 **Soft Power Engagement:** India promotes Buddhist cultural diplomacy and educational exchanges.
  - o **Example-** The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) restored the earthquake-damaged **Ananda Temple in Bagan**, completing conservation work in **2018** at a cost of about **₹11.54 crore**.

## AREAS OF CONFLICT

- ⚡ **Political Instability:** Myanmar’s internal conflict and military rule create diplomatic uncertainty that affects the continuity of bilateral projects and agreements.
- ⚡ **Border Security Issues:** Insurgent groups operate across the porous India–Myanmar border which poses security challenges for India’s Northeastern states.
- ⚡ **Drug Trafficking:** The border region is part of the Golden Triangle narcotics route that leads to widespread drug trafficking into India.
- ⚡ **Arms and Human Trafficking:** Illegal arms and human trafficking networks operate across the border.
- ⚡ **Infrastructure Delays:** Major connectivity projects

face delays due to terrain and instability.

- ⚡ **Chinese Influence:** China’s growing presence in Myanmar, including the development and operation of the **Kyaukphyu deep-water port** under the China–Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), is reducing India’s strategic space in the Bay of Bengal.
- ⚡ **Refugee Crisis:** The Rohingya crisis, marked by the Myanmar military’s persecution and the 2017 crackdown in Rakhine State, led to mass displacement, with around **40,000 stateless Rohingyas** entering India via Bangladesh, creating security and diplomatic challenges.

### WAY FORWARD

- \* **Connectivity Acceleration:** India should fast-track major infrastructure projects in Myanmar to improve regional trade and strategic connectivity.
- \* **Security Cooperation:** Enhanced border surveillance and intelligence sharing are needed to control insurgency and cross-border crime.
- \* **Economic Deepening:** Expanding local currency trade can strengthen bilateral commerce and reduce dependence on external financial systems.
- \* **Regional Cooperation:** Strengthening platforms like BIMSTEC will enhance regional integration in the Bay of Bengal region.
- \* **Soft Power Expansion:** India should enhance cultural and educational outreach in Myanmar to build long-term goodwill and influence.
- \* **Humanitarian Support:** India should continue disaster relief and health assistance to reinforce its image as a reliable regional partner.

### CONCLUSION

India–Myanmar relations remain vital for India’s connectivity to Southeast Asia and the stability of its Northeast region. A balanced approach combining strategic engagement, infrastructure development, and security cooperation is essential for a stable and mutually beneficial partnership.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** “Myanmar is central to India’s Northeast connectivity, security, and economic integration.” Discuss.  
**(10 marks) (150 words)**

# CHINA'S COUNTER-SPACE CAPABILITIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

*Syllabus: GS III - Science & Technology*

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q)** "What is India's plan to have its own space station and how will it benefit our space programme?" (2019)

## WHY IN NEWS

China's growing counter-space capabilities, including ASAT missiles, laser weapons, co-orbital satellites, and plans to deploy 36,000+ LEO satellites by 2030, have raised concerns about the security of space assets and their implications for India's national security.

## INTRODUCTION

The increasing militarisation of outer space has emerged as a critical security challenge in the 21st century. China's rapid advancement in anti-satellite weapons, directed-energy systems, and co-orbital technologies reflects its ambition to achieve space superiority, posing significant strategic implications for India's security, communication, navigation, and surveillance capabilities.

## CHINA'S SPACE AMBITIONS

### Technological and Numerical Dominance:

- China seeks to become a leading global space power by expanding its satellite network and technological capabilities.
- Example-** China currently operates around **1,900 satellites** and plans to deploy over **36,000 Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites by 2030** under projects such as Guowang.

### Military Integration of Space Assets:

- China views space as a critical domain for future warfare and integrates space-based systems into military planning.
- Example-** The PLA relies heavily on satellite-based ISR, navigation, and command-and-control

systems.

### Long-Term Strategic Goals:

- Beijing aims to establish a long-term presence in outer space and exploit extraterrestrial resources.
- Example-** China plans a **Moon landing by 2036**, a **nuclear-powered shuttle by 2040**, and **space-based solar power stations by 2050**.

### Commercial Space Expansion:

- China is promoting private space companies to complement its national objectives.
- Example-** Firms such as **LandSpace, iSpace, and OneSpace** are emerging as competitors to SpaceX and Blue Origin.

## MAJOR COUNTER-SPACE CAPABILITIES OF CHINA

### Kinetic Anti-Satellite (ASAT) Weapons:

- China possesses missiles capable of physically destroying satellites in orbit.
- Example-** The **2007 ASAT test** destroyed the Fengyun-1C satellite, demonstrating China's hard-kill capability.
- Example-** Systems such as **SC-19 and DN-3** can target satellites in low and higher orbits.

### Directed-Energy Weapons:

- China is developing laser-based systems capable of disrupting satellite operations without physical destruction.
- Example-** Ground-based lasers can temporarily

**dazzle or blind imaging satellites**, reducing surveillance effectiveness.

### Co-Orbital Satellites:

- China has developed satellites that can approach and interfere with other satellites in orbit.
- Example-** The **SJ and TJS satellite series** are suspected of possessing inspection and counter-space capabilities.
- Example-** In 2022, a Chinese spacecraft reportedly moved a defunct satellite to a graveyard orbit.

### Electronic Warfare and Cyber Capabilities:

- China can disrupt satellite communications and navigation through jamming and cyber attacks.

- o **Example-** Jamming GPS and satellite communication systems can degrade battlefield awareness.

#### ➔ Orbital Manoeuvre and Robotic Systems:

- o China is demonstrating advanced rendezvous and proximity operations in space.
- o **Example-** Reports of an **orbital dogfight demonstration in 2024** highlighted China's growing manoeuvrability in space.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

### 🇮🇳 Threat to Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR):

- o Chinese counter-space actions could reduce India's ability to monitor border activities.
- o **Example-** Targeting **CARTOSAT and RISAT satellites** could disrupt real-time surveillance along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

### 🇮🇳 Vulnerability of Navigation Systems:

- o India's navigation network could be disrupted during a conflict.
- o **Example-** Jamming or spoofing of the **NavIC system** could affect military operations and civilian transportation.

### 🇮🇳 Limited Satellite Redundancy:

- o India's relatively smaller satellite constellation

increases its vulnerability.

- o **Example-** India operates about **60 satellites**, whereas China has **400+ military satellites**, giving Beijing greater resilience.

### 🇮🇳 Impact on Military Communications:

- o Satellite disruptions could affect command-and-control networks during crises.
- o **Example-** Temporary communication blackouts may hinder coordinated military responses.

### 🇮🇳 Strategic Escalation Risks:

- o Counter-space actions can rapidly escalate a border crisis into a broader conflict.
- o **Example-** Attacks on satellites supporting military operations may trigger retaliatory measures across domains.

## INDIA'S EXISTING STRENGTHS

### ♣️ Credible Deterrence Through Mission Shakti:

- o India has demonstrated the ability to destroy hostile satellites.
- o **Example-** **Mission Shakti (2019)** successfully intercepted a satellite in Low Earth Orbit.

### ♣️ Strong Indigenous Space Programme:

- o ISRO provides India with significant technological capabilities.
- o **Example-** Achievements such as **Chandrayaan-3** and the **NavIC navigation system** demonstrate indigenous expertise.

### ♣️ Expanding Private Sector Participation:

- o Space sector reforms are increasing innovation and manufacturing capacity.
- o **Example-** IN-SPACe and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) are promoting private participation.

### ♣️ Growing Strategic Partnerships:

- o India is strengthening cooperation with like-minded countries in space security.
- o **Example-** Collaboration through the **Quad** and data-sharing agreements with the United States and France.

## MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD INDIA'S INTERESTS

### ☀️ Expand Space Manufacturing and Launch Capacity:

- o India must increase satellite production and launch frequency to improve redundancy.
- o **Example-** Encouraging private firms such as **Skyroot Aerospace and Agnikul Cosmos**.

### ☀️ Develop Distributed Satellite Constellations:

- o Smaller satellite constellations are more resilient than a few large satellites.

- o **Example-** Similar to **Starlink's distributed architecture**, which can withstand individual satellite losses.

### ☀️ Strengthen Space Situational Awareness (SSA):

- o India should enhance its ability to track and monitor objects in space.
- o **Example-** Expansion of the **NETRA programme** for space surveillance.

### ☀️ Secure Ground Infrastructure:

- o Protection of mission control centres and communication networks is essential.
- o **Example-** Cybersecurity upgrades for ISRO and defence space facilities.

#### ☀ **Enhance International Data-Sharing Arrangements:**

- o Access to allied satellite networks can ensure continuity during crises.
- o **Example-** Cooperation with the United States under the **BECA Agreement**.

#### ☀ **Develop Advanced Counter-Space Capabilities:**

- o India should strengthen both deterrence and defensive measures.
- o **Example-** Investment in electronic warfare systems and co-orbital technologies.

#### ☀ **Establish a Clear Space Security Doctrine:**

- o Defining red lines can strengthen deterrence and reduce miscalculation.
- o **Example-** Public articulation of proportional responses to attacks on critical space assets.

## CONCLUSION

China's emergence as a major counter-space power is reshaping the strategic landscape of the Indo-Pacific. For India, safeguarding national interests requires a combination of technological self-reliance, satellite redundancy, stronger international partnerships, enhanced space situational awareness, and credible deterrence. A resilient space architecture will be essential to protect India's military, economic, and strategic interests in an increasingly contested orbital environment.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** Outer space is increasingly becoming a domain of strategic competition. Examine China's counter-space capabilities and their implications for India's security. Suggest measures to strengthen India's space resilience.

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

# KURUKSHETHRA FEBRUARY 2026

## FROM MUD GROUNDS TO SPORTING GLORY

### RURAL SPORTS POWERING INDIA@2047

#### NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE ACT, 2025

- ➔ It replaces the National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 and establishes a **legally binding framework** for sports governance in India.
- ➔ It establishes the **National Sports Board (NSB)** as the central authority for recognising and regulating sports federations.
- ➔ It creates the **National Sports Tribunal (NST)**, which has powers equivalent to a civil court to resolve disputes in sports bodies.
- ➔ **Key Governance Reforms**
  - **Term Limits & Age Caps:** Office-bearers limited to **3 terms (max 12 years)** with an **age cap of 70** (extendable to 75 if allowed by the international federation).
  - **Mandatory Representation:** Executive committees capped at **15 members**, with **at least 4 women** and **2 eminent sportspersons**.
  - **Safe Sports Policy:** NSB must implement a **unified policy** to protect **women, minors, and vulnerable athletes** from abuse.
  - **Internal Grievance Redressal:** Mandatory bodies include an **Ethics Committee, Athletes Committee, and Dispute Resolution Committee**.



#### KHELO BHARAT NITI, 2025

- ➔ **National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025** also called the Khelo Bharat Niti 2025, replaced the National Sports Policy, 2001.
- ➔ It outlines a roadmap to make India a global sporting powerhouse with a **focus on the 2036 Olympics**.
- ➔ Promotes monetizing sports assets through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding.
- ➔ It has 5 strategic pillars - global excellence, economic development, social inclusion, mass participation and integration with education.



#### KHELO INDIA

- ➔ Launched in 2017-18 to give a platform to grassroots athletes and build sports infrastructure across India.
- ➔ It is the flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
- ➔ It was created by merging three erstwhile schemes—the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan, the Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme, and the National Sports Talent Search Scheme.



#### KIRTI (KHELO INDIA RISING TALENT IDENTIFICATION)

- ➔ A scientific talent-scouting program launched in March 2024 targeting children aged 9–18 in rural, tribal, and remote regions.
- ➔ It uses ICT tools and digital analytics to track athletic parameters (speed, agility, endurance).

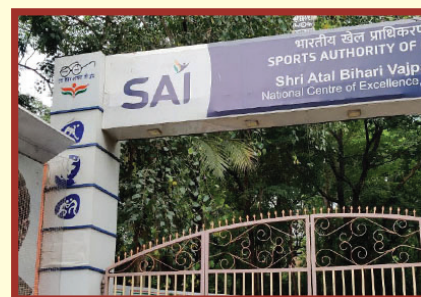
### ASMITA LEAGUE

- ➔ ASMITA officially stands for **Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action**
- ➔ A nationwide women's sports program under the Khelo India mission launched by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2021**.
- ➔ It serves as an affirmative action platform designed to **promote gender-neutral sports**, foster grassroots talent, and increase women's participation across India.
- ➔ It is conducted across 27 sports disciplines at district, state and national levels.
- ➔ In 2024-25, over 53,000 women athletes participated in ASMITA leagues.



### SPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (SAI)

- ➔ The apex national sports body of India, established by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- ➔ SAI was originally set up as a registered society to **maintain, manage, and utilize the massive sports infrastructure built for the 1982 Asian Games** in New Delhi.
- ➔ Functions the twin objectives of promoting sports and achieving sporting excellence at the national and international level.



### SPECIAL AREA GAMES SCHEME

- ➔ Launched by SAI.
- ➔ The primary mandate is to scout natural talent from tribal, rural, coastal, and hilly regions that lack traditional sports infrastructure.
- ➔ They identify potential archers, fencers, cyclists and athletes to provide them systematic training and exposure.

## RURAL TALENT: THE BEDROCK OF INDIAN SPORTS

Approximately **80 percent** of all elite sportspersons representing India on the global platform come from rural areas.

### TARGET OLYMPIC PODIUM SCHEMES (TOPS)

- ➔ Launched by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2014 and revamped in 2018.
- ➔ It aims at enhancing **Olympic and Paralympic performance**.
- ➔ Selected Olympic and paralympic prospects are given foreign training, international exposure, equipment, coaching camps and a stipend of Rs. 50000 per month.
- ➔ It supports 98 core group athletes across 13 sports and 165 development group athletes across 12 sports.



### KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES (KIYG)

- ➔ It was launched in **2018** (originally as the Khelo India School Games) and was renamed to the Khelo India Youth Games in 2019 to broaden its scope for under-17 and under-21 categories
- ➔ KIYG 2025 was held in Bihar with **Gajasimha** as the mascot.

## PROFILES

- ➔ **Neeraj Chopra (Javelin):** Born in a joint farming household in Khandra village (Haryana). Won Olympic Gold at Tokyo 2020, World Championship Gold in 2023, and Olympic Silver at Paris 2024.
- ➔ **Manu Bhaker (Shooting):** 22-year-old from Goriya village, Jhajjar (Haryana). Made history at Paris 2024 by becoming the first Indian athlete to capture two bronze medals (individual and mixed-team 10m air pistol) at a single Olympic Games.
- ➔ **Vandana Katariya (Women's Hockey):** Hailing from Roshanabad village near Haridwar. Holds the active record for the most caps (320 appearances, 158 goals) in Indian women's hockey and was the first Indian woman to strike an Olympic hat-trick (Tokyo 2020).



## RURAL INDIA'S PARA ATHLETE CHAMPIONS

### CASE STUDIES

- ➔ **Sheetal Devi (Para-Archery):** Hailing from Kishtwar (J&K), she was born with Phocomelia (no arms). She trains by holding her custom bow with her right foot, drawing the string back with her teeth, and executing the release via shoulder muscles. Backed by Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ) at age 15, she won individual silver at the European Cup and became the **World No. 1 para-archer in 2025**.
- ➔ **Sumit Antil (Para-Javelin):** From a small farming household in Sonipat (Haryana), he lost his leg in a childhood accident. He went on to win consecutive **Gold medals at Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024** in the F64 classification, consistently rewriting his own world records.
- ➔ **Arunima Sinha (Mountaineering):** A former national athlete from Ambedkar Nagar (UP) who had her left leg amputated after being thrown from a moving train by robbers in 2011. In 2013, she became the first female amputee to climb Mount Everest, subsequently scaling the highest summits across all seven continents.
- ➔ **Ankur Dhama (Para-Athletics):** A completely visually impaired runner from a rural village where blind children face extreme social neglect. Under the tutelage of Padma Shri coach Dr. Satyapal Singh, he became the **first fully blind Indian athlete to compete in the Paralympics** and secure the Arjuna Award.



## REVOLUTIONISING SPORTS TRAINING WITH TECHNOLOGY

### KREEDON

- ➔ Indian **sports-tech and digital media platform** founded in 2015 by IIT Kanpur alumni.
- ➔ Its primary mission is to solve the **lack of information, recognition, and sustainability in the Indian sports ecosystem** at the grassroots level.

## RURAL GAMES ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

### GLOBAL INDIAN PRAVASI KABBADI LEAGUE

- ➔ An international sporting event organized by the Holistic International Pravasi Sports Association (HIPSA).
- ➔ The inaugural season officially kicked off on **April 18, 2025**, in Gurugram, Haryana.
- ➔ Its primary goal is to **globalize kabaddi** and build a strong case for its inclusion in the Olympic Games.



- It features teams with players from various countries like Egypt, Germany and Argentina.

### BHARATIYA KHEL

- Launched by the Ministry of Education's Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) division in 2022.
- It seeks to introduce traditional games into school curriculum across the country.
- 75 heritage games, including kabbadi, Kho-Kho and seven stones are included.



### SEVEN STONES / LAGORI

- It involves a ball and a stack of seven flat stones.
- Regional names across India including: **Pitthu** in North India, **Satodiya** in Gujarat, **Dikori** in Haryana, and **Ezhu Kallu** in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- Its roots trace back roughly **5,000 years to the Indus Valley Civilization**, and it finds mentions in the **Bhagavata Purana**, where Lord Krishna is described playing it with his friends.
- Structured initiatives like Indian Lagori Premier League and World Cup events have modernised it.



### ATYA PATYA

- A **rural tag sport** played during harvest seasons.
- The **Atya Patya Federation of India** is officially recognized as a National Sports Federation (NSF) by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.



### THE RURAL OLYMPICS (QILA RAIPUR SPORTS FESTIVAL)

- Established originally in **1933 near Ludhiana (Punjab)**.
- It bridges standard competitive athletic tracks with traditional agrarian physical strength disciplines (including tractor pulling, camel racing, heavy tire lifting, and bullock cart speed trials).



### MALLAKHAMB

- Etymologically derived from **Malla** (wrestler) and **Khamb** (pole).
- It was structurally systemized in the early 18th century by Balambhatta Deodhar (physical instructor to Peshwa Bajirao II) in Maharashtra.
- It serves as a zero-infrastructure gymnastics conditioning routine requiring only a smooth wooden pole or suspended rope.



### KALARIPAYATTU

- The traditional martial art of Kerala practiced within sacred earthen floor spaces called **Kalaris** under a **Gurukkal**.
- Its historical martial techniques are preserved through oral transmission in legendary folk ballads known as the **Vadakkan Pattukal**.

## WEEKLY DOSSIERS

### EL NIÑO 2026: IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL CLIMATE AND INDIA'S MONSOON SECURITY

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has officially confirmed the onset of **El Niño 2026**, with a high probability of it becoming one of the strongest events on record. Scientists warn that it could intensify global heatwaves, floods, droughts, wildfires, and economic disruptions, including significant impacts on India's monsoon and agriculture.

#### Potential Global Impacts of El Niño 2026

- ◆ **Increased Global Temperatures**
  - El Niño adds extra heat to an already warming planet.
  - **Example:** Scientists predict **2027 could become the hottest year on record.**
- ◆ **More Extreme Weather Events**
  - Intensifies heatwaves, floods, droughts, and wildfires worldwide.
  - **Example:** The 1997–98 El Niño caused billions of dollars in damages globally.
- ◆ **Regional Rainfall Variability**
  - Causes floods in some regions and droughts in others.
  - **Example:** Heavy rainfall in western South America and drought in Australia.
- ◆ **Impact on Hurricanes and Cyclones**
  - Suppresses Atlantic hurricanes but enhances Pacific cyclone activity.
  - **Example:** Increased risk for Hawaii and Pacific island nations.
- ◆ **Economic Losses**
  - Affects agriculture, infrastructure, energy demand, and labour productivity.
  - **Example:** Higher temperatures can reduce economic growth and crop yields.

#### Implications for India

- ◆ **Weakening of Southwest Monsoon**
  - El Niño is often associated with below-normal monsoon rainfall.
  - **Example:** Major drought years such as **2002 and**

**2015** coincided with El Niño events.

- ◆ **Increased Heatwaves**
  - Higher temperatures can intensify heat stress and mortality.
  - **Example:** Northern and Central India may witness prolonged heatwave conditions.
- ◆ **Agricultural Challenges**
  - Rain-fed agriculture becomes vulnerable to rainfall deficits.
  - **Example:** Lower production of rice, pulses, and oilseeds.
- ◆ **Water Security Concerns**
  - Reduced rainfall may lower reservoir and groundwater levels.
  - **Example:** Stress on irrigation and drinking water supplies.
- ◆ **Inflationary Pressures**
  - Lower agricultural output can raise food prices.
  - **Example:** Inflation in cereals, vegetables, and pulses.

#### India's Preparedness Measures

- ◆ **Strengthening Climate Forecasting**
  - Improve seasonal forecasting and early warning systems.
  - **Example:** IMD's monsoon and heatwave prediction models.
- ◆ **Climate-Resilient Agriculture**
  - Promote drought-resistant crop varieties and micro-irrigation.
  - **Example:** PMKSY and climate-smart agriculture initiatives.
- ◆ **Water Conservation**
  - Enhance watershed development and rainwater harvesting.
  - **Example:** Jal Shakti Abhiyan.
- ◆ **Heat Action Plans**
  - Expand city-level heatwave preparedness measures.

- o **Example:** Ahmedabad Heat Action Plan.

#### ◆ Disaster Preparedness

- o Improve response mechanisms for floods, droughts, and wildfires.
- o **Example:** NDMA guidelines on heatwaves and drought management.

### Conclusion

The emergence of a potentially strong El Niño in 2026 highlights the growing interaction between natural climate variability and anthropogenic climate change. For India, proactive planning, climate-resilient infrastructure, and adaptive agricultural strategies will be crucial to minimize its socio-economic impacts.

## CLIMATE CHANGE, DROUGHTS AND ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE: AN EMERGING PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGE

A study published in *Nature Microbiology* (2026) by researchers from Caltech has found that drought conditions can increase antibiotic resistance in soil bacteria by concentrating natural antibiotics in dry soils. The study warns that climate change-induced droughts could significantly worsen antimicrobial resistance (AMR), particularly in drought-prone countries such as India.

### Key Findings of the Study

#### ◆ Drought Increases Antibiotic Resistance in Soil

- o Drying soils concentrate naturally occurring antibiotics, creating selection pressure favouring resistant bacteria.
- o **Example:** Laboratory experiments showed antibiotic-resistant bacteria survived drought conditions better than susceptible bacteria.

#### ◆ Rise in Antibiotic Resistance Genes

- o Drought conditions increase genes responsible for antibiotic production and resistance.
- o **Example:** Analysis of soil DNA samples from the U.S., Europe, and China showed higher prevalence of resistance genes in drier soils.

#### ◆ Link Between Climate Change and AMR

- o Climate-induced droughts can promote antibiotic resistance even without direct antibiotic contamination.
- o **Example:** A warming experiment over 11 years found a **23.9% increase in antibiotic resistance genes**.

#### ◆ Higher Infection Rates in Dry Regions

- o Drier regions reported more antibiotic-resistant infections.
- o **Example:** Hospital data from **116 countries** showed

a correlation between drought and resistant infections.

### Implications

#### ◆ Public Health Risks

- o Increased antibiotic resistance can make common infections difficult to treat.
- o **Example:** Resistant bacterial infections may require expensive second-line drugs.

#### ◆ Food Security Concerns

- o Drought and AMR can jointly affect agricultural productivity.
- o **Example:** Resistant pathogens can spread through livestock and agricultural systems.

#### ◆ Economic Costs

- o Rising healthcare expenditure and productivity losses.
- o **Example:** Longer hospital stays and costlier treatments.

#### ◆ Widening Inequalities

- o Vulnerable populations are likely to face disproportionate impacts.
- o **Example:** Rural communities with poor sanitation are more exposed to resistant infections.

### Measures Required

#### ◆ Strengthen AMR Surveillance

- o Monitor resistance patterns in soil, water, livestock, and humans.
- o **Example:** Establish long-term monitoring stations in drought-prone regions.

### ◆ Integrate AMR into Climate Policies

- Treat AMR as a climate adaptation challenge.
- **Example:** Include AMR indicators in climate vulnerability assessments.

### ◆ Promote Rational Antibiotic Use

- Reduce unnecessary antibiotic consumption.
- **Example:** Strengthen implementation of the National Action Plan on AMR.

### ◆ Expand Vaccination Coverage

- Prevent infections and reduce antibiotic demand.
- **Example:** Typhoid and pneumococcal vaccination programmes.

## Conclusion

The study underscores that antimicrobial resistance is not merely a healthcare issue but also a climate change challenge. As droughts become more frequent and severe, India must adopt an integrated One Health approach combining climate resilience, sustainable agriculture, improved sanitation, vaccination, and robust AMR surveillance to safeguard public health.

## FLOATING SOLAR ENERGY IN INDIA: UNLOCKING RESERVOIR-BASED RENEWABLE POTENTIAL

The National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) has released the first comprehensive national assessment of floating solar potential in India, estimating that the country's reservoirs can support about **102 GW of floating solar capacity**, offering a land-neutral pathway to achieve India's renewable energy targets.

### Key Findings of the NISE Report

#### ◆ Significant Untapped Potential

- India's reservoirs can support approximately **102.18 GW** of floating solar capacity.
- **Example:** The assessment identified **1,946 sq. km** of feasible water surface area.

#### ◆ State-wise Potential Concentration

- A few states account for the majority of the potential.
- **Example:** Maharashtra (16.28 GW), Madhya Pradesh (14.89 GW), Karnataka (13.69 GW), Odisha (12.81 GW), and Telangana (10.72 GW).

#### ◆ Land-Neutral Energy Generation

- Floating solar avoids competition for scarce land resources.
- **Example:** Ground-mounted solar requires **3–4 times more land per MW** than the panel area itself.

#### ◆ Reservoir-Based Deployment

- Only up to **20% of reservoir surface area** was considered suitable to minimize ecological impacts.
- **Example:** Odisha's Hirakud reservoir was used to

demonstrate site-selection criteria.

### Significance of Floating Solar for India

#### ◆ Addresses Land Acquisition Challenges

- Reduces conflicts involving agriculture, forests, and habitation.
- **Example:** Large solar parks often face delays due to land acquisition disputes.

#### ◆ Supports Renewable Energy Targets

- Helps accelerate progress toward India's climate commitments.
- **Example:** Contributes to the target of **500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030**.

#### ◆ Reduces Water Evaporation

- Solar panels shade water surfaces and reduce evaporation losses.
- **Example:** Particularly beneficial in drought-prone regions.

#### ◆ Improves Solar Efficiency

- Water bodies help cool solar panels, enhancing performance.
- **Example:** Floating systems often operate at lower temperatures than ground-mounted systems.

### Challenges Associated with Floating Solar

#### ◆ Higher Initial Costs

- Floating solar projects require additional infrastructure.

- o **Example:** Floats, anchoring systems, and waterproof electrical equipment increase costs by about **25%** compared to ground-mounted systems.

#### ◆ **Technical and Maintenance Issues**

- o Exposure to water and weather creates operational challenges.
- o **Example:** The Omkareshwar project reported loosening float joints and cable failures.

#### ◆ **Environmental Concerns**

- o Excessive surface coverage may affect aquatic ecosystems.
- o **Example:** Reduced sunlight penetration can impact aquatic biodiversity.

### Measures Required

#### ◆ **Promote Dedicated Policy Support**

- o Introduce financial incentives and viability gap funding.
- o **Example:** MNRE is considering support for floating solar and agrivoltaics.

#### ◆ **Encourage Public-Private Partnerships**

- o Mobilize private investment and technological expertise.

- o **Example:** Large reservoir-based projects can be developed through PPP models.

#### ◆ **Strengthen Domestic Manufacturing**

- o Promote indigenous production of floating platforms and anchoring systems.
- o **Example:** Supports Atmanirbhar Bharat in renewable technologies.

#### ◆ **Develop Environmental Guidelines**

- o Ensure ecological sustainability of floating solar projects.
- o **Example:** Define limits on reservoir surface coverage.

#### ◆ **Integrate with Hydropower Infrastructure**

- o Develop hybrid hydro-solar projects.
- o **Example:** Reservoirs behind dams provide ready access to grid infrastructure.

### Conclusion

Floating solar presents a promising solution to India's twin challenges of clean energy expansion and land scarcity. With an estimated potential of over 100 GW, strategic investments, technological innovation, and supportive policies can enable floating solar to become a key pillar of India's renewable energy transition.

## BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

### Supreme Court on Right to Privacy and DNA Testing

- ◆ Recently, the Supreme Court balanced a child's right to know their biological parentage with an alleged father's right to privacy, ruling that DNA tests should not be ordered routinely but may be directed when paternity is genuinely disputed and such evidence is necessary for the fair resolution of a case.
- ◆ The Court reiterated that the **Right to Privacy** is a fundamental right under **Article 21** of the Constitution, as recognised in the **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (2017)** judgment. Internationally, privacy is protected under **Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948** and **Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966**, which safeguard individuals against arbitrary interference with their privacy.

### Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016

- ◆ Recently, the Supreme Court held that in the event of a conflict between the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016** and the **Supreme Court Rules (SCR)**, the provisions of the IBC will prevail.
- ◆ Enacted in 2016, the IBC provides a **time-bound framework for insolvency resolution and reorganisation** of corporate entities, partnership firms, and individuals, with the objective of maximizing asset value and improving ease of doing business.

### Supreme Court on PCPNDT Act

- Recently, the Supreme Court reiterated the need for strict enforcement of the **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994**, highlighting the continued prevalence of sex-selection practices and their adverse impact on India's sex ratio. The Act prohibits sex selection before or after conception and regulates the use of prenatal diagnostic techniques to prevent female foeticide.

### Supreme Court Recognises Economic Value of Homemakers' Work

- In **Shish Ram & Ors. v. Surjeet**, the Supreme Court quantified a homemaker's contribution at **₹30,000 per month** while assessing compensation in a motor accident claim. The Court held that **domestic care and household services provided by homemakers constitute a compensable head of damages**, recognizing their significant economic value. Describing homemakers as **nation builders**, the Court noted that women's unpaid caregiving work is estimated to contribute **15–17% of India's GDP**.
- It further clarified that where a homemaker is also employed, compensation of **₹30,000 for loss of domestic care** may be awarded in addition to income-based compensation.

### National Task Force on Student Mental Health

- The Supreme Court, in **Amit Kumar v. Union of India (2025)**, constituted a **National Task Force (NTF)** to address mental health concerns among students and prevent suicides in **Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)**. The Task Force aims to recommend measures for creating a safer, more supportive, and mentally healthy academic environment across educational institutions.

## ETHICS - CASE STUDY

**Q)** You are the District Magistrate of a financially stressed State that is heading into Assembly elections. The State Government has announced a series of welfare schemes, including free electricity up to a certain limit, free smartphones for youth, cash transfers to women, and free public transport for selected groups. Supporters argue that these measures promote social justice, reduce inequality, and help vulnerable sections of society. Critics contend that many of these schemes are fiscally unsustainable, encourage dependency, divert resources from long-term investments in health, education, and infrastructure, and are primarily intended to gain electoral advantage. A recent report by the State Finance Department warns that the growing subsidy burden may adversely affect developmental expenditure and increase public debt. At the same time, several economically weaker sections have genuinely benefited from these schemes. As a senior civil servant, you are required to provide an objective assessment of the issue and advise the government on balancing welfare objectives with fiscal responsibility.

### Questions

- What are the ethical issues involved in the above case?
- Differentiate between welfare measures and populist freebies from an ethical governance perspective.
- As a public servant, what principles would guide your advice to the government regarding such schemes? Suggest a balanced way forward.

## ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- Environmental Ethics:** NoKasa, founded by Nachiket and Prasad, has transitioned from society-based smart bins in Bengaluru to a doorstep pickup model that rewards users with instant UPI cashback for donating wearable clothes, supported by transparent on-site sorting and categorisation. It has diverted over 23 tonnes of textile waste from landfills through reuse, resale, and recycling channels.
- Human Rights/Accountability:** Himanshu Jangra, during a show by stand-up comedian Pranit More, implied that spending ₹370 on biryani during a date entitled him to intimacy. The National Commission for Women has since taken suo motu cognizance, directing Haryana Police to act and summoning both for a June 22 hearing.
- Consumer Ethics:** The Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Pathanamthitta directed KSRTC to pay ₹25,000 compensation and ₹10,000 costs to a woman who missed her reserved bus after it departed before the scheduled time, causing her to miss a hospital appointment. It held the early departure as “deficiency in service” under the Consumer Protection Act.
- Innovation:** An AI tool, SMARThealth Pregnancy 2, developed by George Institute for Global Health and University of Oxford, aims to help ASHA workers to identify and manage high-risk pregnancies. It uses a co-design approach where ASHAs shape the app, making it better suited to real field conditions and improving maternal health outcomes.
- Social Responsibility:** Faizal Khan, known as Khan Sir, turned his rejection from the Army into a mission of affordable education, starting classes in Patna for as little as ₹200 and founding the Khan GS Research Centre in 2010. During the pandemic, his online lessons reached millions across India, and he reportedly declined a ₹107 crore offer to remain committed to accessible education.
- Resilience:** Anand Megalingam overcame financial hardship, walking kilometres to school in rural Tamil Nadu, faced academic setbacks that led him to shift to Aeronautical Engineering, and even dealt with a denied US visa, yet graduated as a gold medallist. He gained exposure through international and NASA-linked programmes, went on to found Space Zone India, and contributed to missions like RHUMI-1.
- Technology Ethics:** At Athirappilly Waterfalls, 13 tribal habitat-restoration coordinators were given smartphones for real-time monitoring and geo-tagged data collection to reduce human-wildlife conflict under an initiative by the Biodiversity Management Committee, Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation, Gadgeon Smart Systems Pvt. Ltd., and MES Asmabi College.

## MODEL ESSAY

*"Democracy is the art of thinking independently together"*

### Introduction

- Quote by **American philosopher Alexander Meiklejohn**
- Highlights the essence of democracy as a system where individuals retain their freedom of thought while collectively shaping decisions for society.
- The Constituent Assembly united 299 diverse members who debated for **2 years, 11 months, and 18 days** to frame a single, unifying Constitution.

### About Democracy

- Democracy literally means **"rule of the people,"** derived from the Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratos* (power).
- It emphasizes participation, equality, and representation in governance.

### Importance of Thinking Independently Together

- **Safeguarding Individual Freedom:** Democracy ensures civil liberties such as freedom of speech, expression, and belief, enabling citizens to think independently.
- **Strengthening Participation:** High political participation enhances democratic quality Eg: **Kerala People's Plan Campaign (1996),**
- **Promoting Pluralism and Diversity:** Democracy allows coexistence of diverse ideologies, religions, and cultures. Eg: **coalition politics in India**
- **Policy Effectiveness:** Policies framed after debate and consensus are sustainable

### Case Study

In the early 1990s in Rajasthan, villagers exposed corruption in relief work by independently verifying falsified muster rolls during **Jan Sunwais** organized by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan. These public hearings revealed ghost projects and wage fraud, eventually leading to the enactment of the Right to Information Act, 2005.

### Challenges

- **Democratic Backsliding:** Global democracy scores have fallen to **historic lows**, indicating declining democratic quality. Eg: Only about

**6.6% of the world's population lives in full democracies**

- **Declining Participation:** Voter turnout has dropped from around **77% in the 1960s to below 67% after 2010**, reflecting growing apathy.
- **Polarization and Echo Chambers:** Social media creates ideological divisions, weakening collective reasoning.
- **Threats to Freedom of Expression:** Freedom of the press declined in **43 countries**, limiting informed decision-making.
- **Disinformation and Electoral Manipulation:** Fake news, AI misuse, and foreign interference undermine independent thinking and distort democratic outcomes.

### Way Forward

- Promote **political literacy and critical thinking** among citizens.
- Ensure **independence of judiciary, media, and election bodies**
- **Increase voter turnout** through awareness campaigns (SVEEP by the Election Commission of India ) and easier access to voting.
- Regulate fake news and **promote fact-checking** mechanisms.
- **Local governance institutions** should be empowered further.

### Conclusion

- The true strength of democracy lies in harmonizing diversity—where independent minds converge into a shared vision.
- In an era of polarization and democratic decline, nurturing this balance is essential for sustaining democratic values and ensuring inclusive progress.

### Sample Quote

- *Character is much easier kept than recovered - Thomas Paine*
- *The bamboo that bends is stronger than the oak that resists - Japanese Proverb*
- *Once the game is over, the king and the pawn go back in the same box. - John Boys*

## MAINS JOT DOWN



### GS II: GOVERNANCE

- The **E-Jagriti platform**, developed by the Department of Consumer Affairs, was recently conferred the **National Award for e-Governance 2026**.
- It is a nationwide digital system that integrates and computerizes Consumer Commissions across India, facilitating transparent, efficient, and speedy resolution of consumer grievances while enhancing the effectiveness of the consumer dispute redressal mechanism.



### GS III: AGRICULTURE

- India is set to begin the large-scale cultivation of **Imidazolinone-Resistant (IMI-resistant) mustard hybrids**, a significant development for boosting domestic oilseed production.
- Developed through **mutation breeding**, these hybrids possess naturally occurring mutations that make them resistant to imidazolinone herbicides, enabling effective weed control and potentially improving productivity.
- The initiative gains importance as India remains heavily dependent on edible oil imports, importing nearly **16 million tonnes worth about ₹1.6 lakh crore in 2024–25**.



### GS III: CYBER SECURITY

- The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** has noted that Indians lost approximately **₹52,976 crore to cyber-enabled frauds** over the last six years, with nearly **8% of these losses attributed to digital arrest scams**.



### GS II: HEALTH

- Under the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**, India has generated over **90 crore ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) IDs**, reflecting significant progress towards a digitally integrated healthcare system. Implemented by the **National Health Authority (NHA)**, the mission seeks to create a secure, interoperable, and patient-centric digital health ecosystem that ensures affordable, accessible, and quality healthcare for all.



### GS III: ENERGY

- Recently, the Ministry of Defence approved its first-ever **250 MW Solar Power Project with a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)** on vacant defence land in Uttar Pradesh.
- **BESS** is an electrochemical energy storage system that captures excess electricity generated from sources such as solar power and stores it for later use, ensuring reliable power supply and better integration of renewable energy into the grid.



### GS III: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

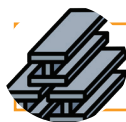
- Recently, the **IndiaAI Mission** launched **Varya**, an indigenous distilled video AI model designed to make advanced video-generation technology more affordable, accessible, and relevant for Indian users.
- Developed by **Avataar** with support from the IndiaAI Mission, Varya represents a significant step towards strengthening India's domestic AI ecosystem and technological self-reliance.



### GS III: DEFENCE

- Russia offered India its **fifth-generation Sukhoi Su-57 stealth fighter aircraft** along with a proposal for joint production in India.
- The Su-57 features **stealth technology, supercruise capability, integrated avionics, and advanced networking systems** for enhanced situational awareness and combat effectiveness. It can also function as an **airborne command centre**, including for coordinating unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

- Recently, the Union Defence Minister termed **Project Kusha** a "game changer" for India's security architecture.
- Developed by **DRDO**, it is an indigenous **long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system** designed to counter fighter aircraft, stealth platforms, drones, cruise missiles, and certain ballistic missile threats.
- Featuring interceptor variants with ranges of **150 km, 250 km, and 350–400 km**, it is envisioned as India's answer to the **S-400** and forms a key part of **Mission Sudarshan Chakra**, aimed at building a multi-layered air and missile defence shield by 2035.



### GS III: INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Vinimay**, the **Land Port Management System (LPMS)**, is a centralized digital platform developed by the **Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI)** to streamline and integrate cargo processing and passenger movement across India's land borders.



### GS III: ECONOMICS

- According to the latest **Global Economic Prospects (GEP)** report, India's growth forecast for **2026–27** has been revised upward to **6.6% from 6.5%**, reaffirming its position as the **world's fastest-growing major economy**. The growth outlook is supported by strong domestic demand, sustained public investment, and macroeconomic stability.

## CHERRY PICKS OF THE WEEK

### INFILTRATION EXCESS

- It is also known as **Hortonian Runoff**, occurs when the **intensity of rainfall exceeds the soil's infiltration capacity**, preventing the ground from absorbing water fast enough. As a result, excess water flows over the land surface as runoff, often increasing the risk of soil erosion and flash floods.

### PYROPROCESSING

- It is a **high-temperature, dry, and energy-intensive process** used to bring about physical or chemical changes in materials. It is widely used in **cement production, metal extraction from ores**, and the **reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel**.

### DARK PATTERNS

- They are deceptive user interface (UI) or user experience (UX) designs used on digital platforms to manipulate, mislead, or trick users into making decisions they did not originally intend, such as sharing personal data, making purchases, or subscribing to services.

### DUST STORM

- It is a weather phenomenon in which strong winds, often associated with thunderstorms, lift large amounts of dust and debris into the atmosphere, forming a dense wall of dust.
- These storms typically originate in dry and desert regions but can travel long distances, affecting areas far from their source.

### EPICHLOROHYDRIN

- It is a chlorinated epoxide used primarily in the manufacture of **epoxy resins, synthetic glycerine, and elastomers**. It is a **volatile, flammable, clear, colourless liquid** with a chloroform-like odour and can emit toxic fumes, including hydrochloric acid and other chlorinated compounds when heated or burned.