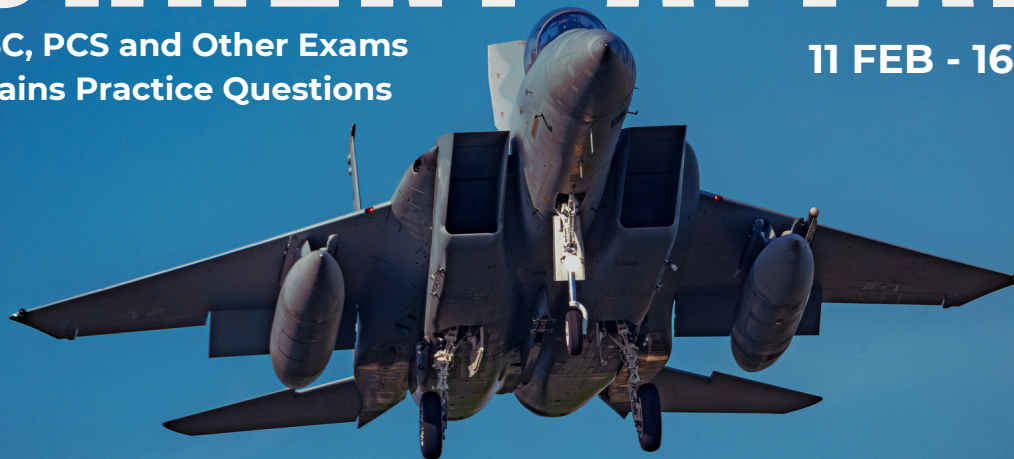


# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

For UPSC, PCS and Other Exams  
Pre & Mains Practice Questions

11 FEB - 16 FEB, 2025



DEFENCE COOPERATION AND F-35  
FIGHTER JET SALE

CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX  
INDIA'S PHARMACEUTICAL EXPORTS  
CHINA'S DAM PROJECT  
LA NINA & GLOBAL WARMING

## 1. INDIA'S PHARMACEUTICAL EXPORTS

**News:** India's Pharmaceutical exports are projected to reach \$350 billion by 2047, a 10-15 times increase from current levels.

### About India's Pharmaceutical industry

- It has gained international recognition as the "Pharmacy of the World," particularly for its imperative role in supplying vaccines, essential medicines, and medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- The sector has showcased its innovative capabilities and established itself as a crucial global pharmaceutical value chain member.

### Current Status in the Global Market:

- India is the largest supplier of generic drugs globally, accounting for 20% of global sales.
- India ranks third globally in drug and pharmaceutical production by volume.
- India exports to approximately 200 countries and territories.
  - The top five destinations for these exports are the USA, Belgium, South Africa, the UK, and Brazil.
- India ranks 11th in pharmaceutical export value, and the total annual turnover of pharmaceuticals in FY24 was ₹4.17 lakh crore, growing at an average rate of 10.1 per cent in the last five years.

### Export Projections

- India's pharmaceutical exports are expected to grow from \$27 billion in 2023 to \$65 billion by 2030.
- The shift from volume-based to value-driven growth is key to India's pharmaceutical sector.
- Focus areas for growth include Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), biosimilars, and specialty generics.
  - API Market Growth: India's API exports are projected to grow from \$5 billion to \$80-90 billion by 2047.
    - Global supply chain diversification, particularly due to the U.S. Biosecure Act, presents an opportunity for India to strengthen API production.
  - Biosimilars Market Growth: Indian biosimilar exports, currently valued at \$0.8 billion, are expected to grow fivefold to \$4.2 billion by 2030 and \$30-35 billion by 2047. Increased R&D, regulatory simplifications, and capacity expansion will support this growth.
    - Biosimilars are medications that closely resemble biologic drugs, produced through living systems such as yeast, bacteria, or animal cells, and exhibit comparable structure and function.
  - Generic Formulations Growth: Generic formulations make up 70% of India's pharmaceutical exports, valued at \$19 billion.
    - These are projected to grow to \$180-190 billion by 2047, with a shift towards higher-margin specialty generics.

### Policy and Strategic Measures

- The Government of India has implemented several initiatives to promote the pharmaceutical sector and boost investment.
  - In September 2020, the government introduced the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the pharmaceutical sector under the Self-Reliant India initiative, with a financial outlay of worth Rs.15,000 Crore, and the scheme duration is from 2020-2021 to 2028-29.
- Now, there is a need for targeted policy measures, strengthening the API industry, addressing export barriers, and establishing country-specific export strategies.
- India supplies 55-60% of UNICEF's vaccines but needs to focus more on high-value markets via clinical trials and manufacturing investments.
- Regulatory harmonization, expansion of production-linked incentives (PLI), and R&D incentives will be key enablers.

### Challenges

- India is dealing with several challenges, including tackling intellectual property rights, lack of research and development etc.
- Understanding the political, economic, sociocultural, technological, environmental, and legal factors is vital for assessing the opportunities and challenges in the pharmaceutical market in India.

### Conclusion and Way Ahead:

- India is already a global leader in generic drug supply and aims to move up the value chain with specialty generics, biosimilars, and innovative products.
  - This shift could help India secure a position among the top five nations in export value by 2047.
- India has set its goal to be the "healthcare custodian of the world," with a focus on innovation, R&D, and regulatory processes. And collaboration between academia, industry, and government is key to building a globally competitive pharmaceutical sector.

## 2. INDIA-US STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

### News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump convened in Washington, marking a pivotal moment in India-US relations.
- Their discussions encompassed defense cooperation, trade growth, energy security, and technological collaboration.
- Several key agreements were signed, strengthening the strategic partnership between the world's two largest democracies.
- Both leaders pledged to advance defense trade, set ambitious trade goals, and enhance collaboration in cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, and space exploration.

### Key India-US Agreements

#### Defense Cooperation

- The US will sell F-35 stealth fighter jets to India, boosting air combat capabilities.
- A new 10-year US-India Major Defense Partnership framework will be signed.
- India will procure six additional P8I maritime surveillance aircraft.
- Joint defense manufacturing, technology sharing, and ITAR review will streamline defense trade.
- The US and India will collaborate on autonomous defense technologies under ASIA.

#### Extradition of 26/11 Accused Tahawwur Rana

- The US confirmed Rana's extradition for his role in the 2008 Mumbai attacks.
- The move strengthens India-US counterterrorism collaboration.

#### Trade Expansion ('Mission 500')

- Target of \$500 billion annual bilateral trade by 2030.
- A new Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) will be signed by fall 2025.
- Indian investments in the US have created 3,000+ jobs.
- Both nations will resolve trade barriers and reciprocal tariffs.

#### Energy & Nuclear Cooperation

- India to increase US oil and gas imports, reducing trade imbalances.
- The US will support India's International Energy Agency (IEA) membership.
- Full implementation of the US-India 123 Civil Nuclear Agreement, including nuclear reactor construction and modular reactor collaboration.

#### Education & People-to-People Ties

- 300,000+ Indian students contribute \$8 billion annually to the US economy.
- Joint degree programs, student exchanges, and offshore US university campuses planned.
- Visa processes for professionals and students to be streamlined.

#### Technology & Innovation

- Launch of US-India TRUST initiative for critical technologies.
- Expansion of INDUS Innovation in AI, semiconductors, and space.
- Collaboration on quantum computing, biotech, and strategic mineral access.
- Research partnerships through MoUs between US and Indian institutions.

#### Multilateral & Indo-Pacific Strategy

- Both leaders reaffirmed commitment to QUAD.
- PM Modi invited President Trump for the Quad Leaders' Summit.
- Launch of the Indian Ocean Strategic Venture to enhance regional economic ties.
- Joint condemnation of cross-border terrorism, urging action from Pakistan.



## F-35B at a glance

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter made by Lockheed Martin has three variants. A closer look at some features of the F-35B variant that Singapore is interested in.

### SHORT TAKE-OFF/VERTICAL LANDING (STOVL) CAPABILITY

The F-35B is the world's first supersonic STOVL stealth aircraft. STOVL allows the plane to take off from shorter runways, hover and land like a helicopter.

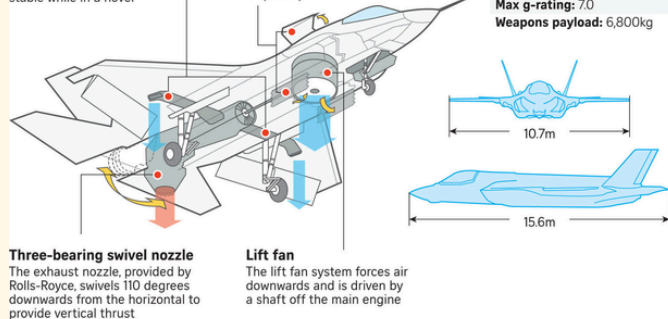
#### Roll posts

Two roll posts which force air out through the wings to keep the jet stable while in a hover

Doors open above and below the lift fan as it spins up

#### Specifications

Speed: Mach 1.6 or 1960kmh  
Combat radius: 833km  
Range: 1,667km  
Internal fuel capacity: 6,125kg  
Max g-rating: 7.0  
Weapons payload: 6,800kg



#### Three-bearing swivel nozzle

The exhaust nozzle, provided by Rolls-Royce, swivels 110 degrees downwards from the horizontal to provide vertical thrust

#### Lift fan

The lift fan system forces air downwards and is driven by a shaft off the main engine

Source: LOCKHEED MARTIN STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

## Significance of the India-US Strategic Partnership

- **Strengthening Defence Ties:** The sale of F-35 jets and co-production agreements will boost India's security.
- **Trade and Investment Growth:** 'Mission 500' sets a bold trade target for the next decade.
- **Energy Security:** Increased oil and gas imports and nuclear cooperation will enhance India's energy stability.
- **Technology Leadership:** AI, quantum computing, and semiconductor initiatives will boost India's tech ecosystem.
- **Global Strategic Influence:** India's partnership with the US strengthens its position in the Indo-Pacific region.

## Conclusion

- The India-US strategic partnership continues to grow, with major agreements in defence, trade, energy, and technology.
- The two nations are committed to enhancing economic cooperation, counterterrorism efforts, and global peace initiatives.
- As India and the US deepen their alliance, they set the stage for a stronger, more resilient partnership in the years ahead.

# 3. NITI AAYOG REPORT ON STATE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

**News:** NITI Aayog launched a policy report titled 'Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Public Universities'.

### About the Report

- The report is a first-of-its kind policy document in the higher education sector focused specifically on States and State Public Universities (SPUs).
  - State Public University (SPU) is a university established or incorporated by a Provincial Act or by a State Act can be termed a State (Public) University.
- It provides detailed quantitative analysis on vital indicators of Quality, Funding and Financing, Governance and Employability over the last decade across the themes.

## Key Findings of Report

- **Highest Funding:** Maharashtra leads in higher education funding, followed by Bihar and Tamil Nadu.
- **Lowest Funding:** Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland have the lowest higher education budgets.
- **University Density:** The national average university density is 0.8.
  - Sikkim has the highest density of 10.3, followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Uttarakhand.
  - In Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra, density at the state level is below the national average.
- **Female Enrolment:** Kerala, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh have higher female enrolment rates than males.

## Challenges

- Dearth of good quality infrastructure.
- Shortage of faculty and staff.
- Insufficient expenditure on R&D.
- There is a low enrolment of students at the MTech and Ph.D. levels, presenting a significant challenge in fostering advanced research and academic growth.
- Courses, syllabus, curriculum not being industry-ready.
- Issues in funding: They face financial challenges due to dependency on traditional revenue sources such as admission fees and state grants.

## Recommendations

- It has presented nearly 80 policy recommendations to address various issues related to four areas of SPUs: quality of education; funding and financing; governance; and employability among students enrolled in them.
- Increasing the combined investment of Centre and States on education to 6% of GDP as recommended in NEP 2020.
- Increasing the R&D Investment (public and private) to 2% of GDP as recommended in the Economic Survey 2017-18.
- Clusters of SPUs should identify 2 to 3 local issues and establish Centres of Excellence dedicated to addressing these challenges.
- States may consider establishing a finance agency similar to the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA), dedicated specifically to SPUs.
  - HEFA is a joint venture of the Centre and Canara Bank set up in 2017.
  - This agency should focus on bolstering infrastructure and research facilities.

# 4. CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX (CPI) 2024

**News:** India ranked 96 out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2024.

### About

- The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024 highlights how corruption is hindering global efforts to combat climate change.

- The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption.
- It uses a scale of zero to 100, where “zero” is highly corrupt and “100” is very clean.
- The report has been compiled by Transparency International.
- Corruption is an evolving global threat that does far more than undermine development – it is a key cause of declining democracy, instability and human rights violations.

#### Key CPI 2024 Findings

- 85% of the world’s population lives in countries with CPI scores below 50.
- India scored 38 out of 100, dropping one point from 2023, and ranked 96th.
- Least Corrupt Countries: Denmark, Finland, Singapore.
- Most Corrupt Countries: South Sudan, Somalia, Venezuela.

#### How Corruption is Affecting Climate Action?

- Weakens Climate Policies: Corruption prioritizes the interests of a few powerful groups over the public good, leading to weaker environmental policies.
- Erodes Governance & Law Enforcement: Poor governance and lack of transparency reduce accountability in climate decision-making.
- Misuse of Climate Funds: Many climate-vulnerable nations score below 50 on CPI, increasing risks of fund misallocation.
- Worsens Inequality: Marginalized communities bear the brunt of climate change due to ineffective policies.
- Undermines Multilateralism: Corruption influences climate negotiations, empowering fossil fuel lobbyists and reducing transparency.

#### Recommendations

- Strengthen Anti-Corruption Measures: Integrate safeguards in climate finance and policies.
- Increase Transparency in Climate Policy: Implement lobbying regulations and open climate finance records.
- Enhance Investigations & Protections: Protect whistleblowers and environmental activists.
- Promote Public Engagement: Ensure communities affected by climate change are included in decision-making.

## 5. MANIPUR UNREST & PRESIDENT’S RULE

**News:** The resignation of the Chief Minister of Manipur has loomed the possibility of President’s Rule in the state.

#### Article 356 of the Constitution

- Article 356 empowers the President of India to impose President’s Rule in a state when governance cannot be carried out as per constitutional provisions.
- This typically follows a report from the Governor, stating that the state machinery has failed.
  - The President issues a proclamation that transfers the state government’s functions to the Centre and the state legislature’s powers to Parliament.
  - The judiciary, especially the High Court, continues to function without interference.
  - The proclamation remains valid for up to two months but must be approved by both Houses of Parliament to extend further.

- If approved, the Rule can last for six months and be extended in increments of six months, up to a maximum of three years.

#### President’s Rule in India

- Since the adoption of the Constitution, Article 356 has been invoked 134 times across various states and Union Territories.
- Manipur and Uttar Pradesh have seen its imposition the most, at ten times each. However, some states and UTs have spent longer durations under central control than others.
  - Other states, like Jammu and Kashmir or Punjab, might have had fewer instances but longer periods of central rule due to specific circumstances like prolonged political instability or security concerns.

#### S R Bommai v Union of India (1994) Case

- The Supreme Court, in the landmark S R Bommai v. The Union of India case placed restrictions on the misuse of Article 356.
- The judgment established that;
  - The President’s decision is subject to judicial review.
  - Courts can strike down the imposition if found illegal, mala fide, or based on extraneous considerations.
  - The state legislature alone would be suspended, and the executive and other arms of governance would continue unless Parliament ratified the proclamation within two months.

#### Way Ahead

- President’s Rule, while a constitutionally sanctioned instrument, remains a debatable issue in Indian politics.
- The ongoing debate surrounding its application, as seen in the Manipur situation, underscores the need for a balanced approach, ensuring both the stability of state governments and the preservation of constitutional values.

#### Manipur Unrest: A Brief Overview

Manipur has been experiencing violent ethnic clashes primarily between the Meitei and Kuki communities.

##### • Causes

- ST Status Demand – Meiteis seek Scheduled Tribe status, opposed by Kukis fearing loss of land rights.
- Ethnic Tensions – Long-standing divides between valley-dwelling Meiteis and hill tribes (Kukis, Nagas).
- Illegal Immigration & Drugs – Crackdowns on illegal immigrants and poppy cultivation fueled tensions.
- Political & Administrative Issues – Allegations of biased governance and ineffective law enforcement.

##### • Recent Developments

- Violence & Displacement – Large-scale clashes, arson, and thousands in relief camps.
- Security Measures – Internet shutdowns, military deployment, and Supreme Court intervention.
- Peace Talks & Political Fallout – Ongoing efforts for reconciliation amid criticism of the government.

##### • Impact & Way Forward

- Humanitarian Crisis – Displacement, economic disruptions, and deepening ethnic divides.
- Restoring Normalcy – Dialogue, fair governance, security reinforcement, and economic aid.
- Manipur’s unrest demands sustained peace efforts and inclusive policies for lasting stability.

## 6. INDIA- FRANCE COOPERATION ON IMEC PROJECT

**News:** India and France announced that they would continue to work closely to implement the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) project.

### India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

- **Participants:** During the Delhi G20 Summit, India, USA, UAE, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
- **Objective:** The corridor will encourage and provide impetus to economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

### Components

- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor will consist of two separate corridors,
  - The East corridor connecting India to West Asia/Middle East and
  - The Northern corridor connecting West Asia/Middle East to Europe.
- The project would involve the building of a railway line across the Arabian Peninsula through the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia and develop shipping connectivity to India and Europe on either end of this corridor.
- The corridor could be further developed to transport energy through pipelines and data through an optical fiber link.

### Ports Which are Part of IMEC

- **India:** Ports in Mundra (Gujarat), Kandla (Gujarat), and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (Navi Mumbai).
- **Europe:** Piraeus in Greece, Messina in Southern Italy, and Marseille in France.
- **Middle East:** Ports include Fujairah, Jebel Ali, and Abu Dhabi in the UAE, as well as Dammam and Ras Al Khair ports in Saudi Arabia.
- **Israel:** Haifa port.
- **Railway Line:** The railway line will link Fujairah port in the UAE to Haifa port in Israel, passing through Saudi Arabia (Ghuwaifat and Haradh) and Jordan.

### India-France Partnership in IMEC

- **Access to European Markets:** France's strategic location provides India with a crucial gateway to European markets, facilitating trade and investment flows.
- **Technological Collaboration:** France's expertise in infrastructure development, logistics, and digital technologies is invaluable for the successful implementation of the IMEC.
- **Countering China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):** India and France, both wary of the BRI's implications, can leverage the IMEC to offer an alternative model of regional connectivity.

### Hurdle before IMEC

- **Vulnerability of the Strait of Hormuz:** Almost the entire trade of the IMEC architecture flows through the Strait of Hormuz and with Iran's proximity and control over the strait, the risk of disruptions remain very high.

- **Financial Viability:** Securing adequate funding for such a large-scale project is essential. A clear and robust financial model is needed to attract investors.
- **Geopolitical Sensitivities:** The project involves multiple stakeholders with diverse interests. Navigating these complexities and ensuring consensus will be crucial.

### Way Ahead

- India and France share converging interests in promoting stability and connectivity in the Indo-Pacific region, making them natural partners in this endeavor.
- The geopolitical concerns need to be managed by striking a delicate balance in accommodating the geopolitical interests of the participating nations and addressing potential political sensitivities.

## 7. LIFETIME BAN ON CONVICTED POLITICIANS

**News:** The Supreme Court is reviewing petitions for a lifetime ban on convicted individuals from contesting elections.

### Current Law:

- **RP Act, 1951:** Convicts sentenced to 2+ years are disqualified for six years post-release.
- **Heinous Crimes:** Those convicted of serious offenses like rape, corruption, and terrorism face immediate disqualification.

### Criminalisation of Politics:

- **ADR Report (2024):** 46% of MPs have criminal cases; 31% face serious charges.
- **Electoral Advantage:** Criminal candidates have a 15.4% win rate compared to 4.4% for those with clean records.

### Arguments For a Lifetime Ban:

- Ensures integrity in politics and upholds public trust.
- Prevents criminals from misusing power and influencing laws.
- Protects social justice and security.

### Arguments Against:

- Convicts retain democratic rights and may reform.
- Could be unfair if legal status changes.
- May limit voters' choice and risk state overreach.

### Past SC Judgments:

- **ADR Case (2002):** Mandated disclosure of candidates' criminal records.
- **Lily Thomas Case (2013):** Struck down protection for convicted legislators, enforcing immediate disqualification.

### Way Forward:

- **Stronger Legal Reforms:** Amend election laws to bar serious offenders from contesting.
- **Fast-Track Courts:** Speed up trials for politicians to prevent misuse of delayed justice.
- **Voter Awareness:** Educate citizens to discourage voting for candidates with criminal backgrounds.
- **Political Accountability:** Parties should deny tickets to tainted candidates and enforce internal ethics codes.

**Conclusion:** Various commissions and the EC have recommended stricter laws, but political consensus remains elusive.



## 8. CONCERNS RELATED TO CHINA'S DAM PROJECT

**News:** China's plan to construct the world's largest hydropower dam on the Brahmaputra River, known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, has raised significant concerns among downstream countries, particularly India and Bangladesh.

### China's Mega-Dam Project

- Capacity: 60 GW (14th Five-Year Plan, for 2021–2025); Three times the capacity of China's current Three Gorges Dam;
  - China aims to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060.
  - Cost: About \$137 Bn.
  - Location: At the Great Bend, where the Brahmaputra river takes a U-turn, in the Medog county of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

### Yarlung Tsangpo (Zangbo) River

- It originates in Tibet, and enters Arunachal Pradesh, where it is known as the Siang.
- In Assam, it is joined by tributaries such as Dibang and Lohit, and is called the Brahmaputra.
- The river then enters Bangladesh, and makes its way to the Bay of Bengal.
- The main river does not flow through Bhutan, but 96% of the country's area is within the basin.



### Implications of the Dam Project

#### Environmental & Ecological Concerns

- Reduced Sediment Flow: Chinese dams trap sediments, reducing soil fertility in India and Bangladesh.
- Flash Flood Risks: Sudden water releases can trigger devastating floods in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Biodiversity Threats: Disrupts river ecosystems and endangers species like the Gangetic dolphin.
- Climate & Seismic Risks: Located in an earthquake-prone Himalayan region, the dam could trigger landslides and ecological damage.

#### Geopolitical & Economic Ramifications

- India's Water Vulnerability: China's control over the Brahmaputra raises concerns over restricted flow or artificial floods.
- Legal Hurdles: China is not bound by international water-sharing laws, limiting diplomatic recourse.
- Regional Conflicts: Southeast Asian nations face similar issues due to China's upstream damming of the Mekong River.

- Displacement & Food Security: Altered water flows impact irrigation, fisheries, and local livelihoods.

### Way Forward

- Boosting Water Infrastructure: India must accelerate dam and hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Diplomatic Engagement: Strengthen ties with Bangladesh and regional allies for a collective approach.
- Satellite & Early Warning Systems: Enhance monitoring of Chinese dams to predict and mitigate risks.
- Legal & Strategic Measures: Advocate for regional water-sharing agreements and explore international arbitration.

## 9. JUDICIAL OVERREACH: INVOLVEMENT OF CJI IN EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

**News:** Recently, the Vice-President of India raised significant concerns over judicial overreach, specifically questioning the role of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) in executive appointments.

### Understanding Judicial Overreach in India

- Judicial overreach refers to an extreme form of judicial activism where arbitrary, unreasonable, and frequent interventions by the judiciary encroach upon the legislature's or executive's domain.
- It occurs when the court oversteps its constitutional role by making policy decisions or laws, which is the prerogative of the legislature.
- India's democratic framework ensures a system of checks and balances, delineating distinct roles for the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary.
- Former Chief Justices of India, including Ranjan Gogoi and P. Sathasivam, have emphasized the fine line between judicial activism and overreach, cautioning against excessive judicial intervention in governance.
- Article 50 mandates separation of the judiciary from the executive.

### Judicial Overreach: Key Instances & Implications

#### Notable Cases

- Madras HC on 'Vande Mataram' (2017): Mandated its singing in schools and offices, seen as excessive interference.
- SC's National Anthem Mandate: Compulsory playing of the anthem in cinemas was viewed as unnecessary policymaking.
- Madras HC on Aadhaar-Social Media Linking (2019): Proposal raised privacy concerns and was criticized as overreach.

### Intervention in Executive Appointments

- Striking Down NJAC (2015): SC overturned the 99th Constitutional Amendment, retaining judicial primacy in appointments.
- Prakash Singh Case (2006): SC directed police reforms, overriding executive discretion.
- CBI Director Alok Verma Case (2018): SC reinstated Verma, challenging executive authority.

Aspect	Judicial Activism	Judicial Overreach
<b>Definition</b>	Proactive role of the judiciary in upholding constitutional rights and filling legislative gaps.	When courts exceed their jurisdiction and interfere in executive or legislative functions.
<b>Purpose</b>	Protects fundamental rights and ensures justice.	Undermines the separation of powers and disrupts governance.
<b>Trigger</b>	Occurs when the executive or legislature fails to act effectively.	Happens when the judiciary unnecessarily intervenes in policy matters.
<b>Key Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expands the scope of justice through broad interpretation.</li> <li>- Often initiated through Public Interest Litigation (PIL).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Judiciary steps beyond its constitutional role.</li> <li>- Leads to governance disruptions.</li> </ul>
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997)</b>: Laid down guidelines for workplace sexual harassment.</li> <li>- <b>Right to Privacy (2017)</b>: Declared privacy a fundamental right.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Ban on firecrackers (2018)</b>: Considered an executive matter.</li> <li>- <b>2G Spectrum Case (2012)</b>: Judicial interference in economic policy decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	Strengthens democracy by holding the government accountable.	Weakens democratic institutions by overriding elected bodies.

### International Comparison

- **USA**: Judges are appointed by the President with Senate confirmation, ensuring executive oversight.
- **UK**: Parliamentary supremacy limits judicial interference.
- **France & Germany**: Judiciary plays a limited role in executive decisions.

### Implications of Judicial Overreach

- **Erodes Separation of Powers**: Undermines Article 50, disrupting democratic balance.
- **Policy Inefficiencies**: Court-imposed policies may lack feasibility.
- **Strained Government Relations**: Increases friction between judiciary and executive.

### Way Forward

- **Judicial Accountability Bill**: Introduce transparency in judicial functioning.
- **Collegium Reform**: Ensure executive consultation in appointments.
- **Judicial Self-Restraint**: Courts should avoid direct policymaking.

Judicial overreach, while sometimes well-intended, risks disrupting governance. A balanced approach is crucial to uphold democracy and constitutional integrity.

## 10. FREEZE ON USAID BY UNITED STATES

**Context:** US President Donald Trump has taken steps to close the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

### What is USAID?

- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent agency of the U.S. government, established in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy.
- It was created to consolidate various foreign assistance programs under one agency to administer civilian foreign aid and development assistance.
  - USAID receives funding allocated in the U.S. federal budget.
- The top recipient countries of USAID include: Ukraine, Ethiopia, Jordan, Somalia etc.

### Objectives and Areas of Work

- It operates in over 100 countries, providing financial aid and technical assistance in key sectors such as:
  - Economic development, Health and education, Food security and humanitarian assistance, Climate change mitigation and Democracy and governance.

- USAID collaborates with governments, NGOs, businesses, and international organizations, offering grants and assistance for development projects. Some notable initiatives include:
  - President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), addressing HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.
  - Feed the Future, tackling hunger and food security issues.
  - Power Africa, expanding electricity access across Africa.
  - Water for the World Act, improving water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

### Implications of freeze on USAID

- **Impact on U.S. Global Influence**: Foreign aid has been instrumental in Washington's efforts to build alliances and counter geopolitical rivals like China and Russia in developing nations.
  - The freeze may reduce U.S. influence in strategic regions.
- **Rise of Alternative Development Partners**: Countries such as China, through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), could step in to fill the aid vacuum, increasing their strategic leverage.
- **Humanitarian Setbacks**: Several vulnerable nations will struggle to meet development goals due to funding cuts, affecting education, healthcare, and infrastructure programs.

### USAID's Role in India

- USAID's engagement with India began in 1951 under the India Emergency Food Aid Act signed by President Harry Truman.
- The funding freeze is unlikely to have a major impact on India, given its reduced dependence on USAID assistance.
  - However, it may affect select ongoing projects in health and sanitation. In 2024, USAID allocated \$79.3 million for India's healthcare sector.

### Concluding remarks

- The freeze on USAID funding by the U.S. government has wide-ranging implications for global development efforts.
- While India is relatively insulated from its effects, many developing nations reliant on U.S. aid may face significant challenges.
- The move underscores the need for nations to explore alternative strategies for ensuring sustained development assistance and economic stability.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### La Nina & Global Warming

**News:** Despite the arrival of the La Niña phase, the global average surface air temperature breached the 1.5 degree Celsius threshold.

#### What is La Nina?

- It means Little Girl in Spanish. La Niña is also sometimes called El Viejo, anti-El Niño, or simply “a cold event.”
- The trade winds become stronger than usual, pushing more warmer waters towards the Indonesian coast, and making the eastern Pacific Ocean colder than normal.

#### Impact on Weather Patterns

- North America: La Niña is often associated with colder winters in the northern U.S. and Canada and warmer, drier conditions in the southern U.S. (such as in the southwestern states).
- South America: La Niña often causes droughts in countries like Peru and Ecuador while bringing more rain to Brazil.
- Asia and Oceania: La Niña tends to bring increased rainfall and a higher risk of flooding to countries like Indonesia, Australia, and parts of Southeast Asia.

#### Impact on India

- More rainfall in most regions, leading to a stronger monsoon.
- Increased risk of flooding and waterlogging in many parts of the country.
- Cooler temperatures during the post-monsoon and winter months.
- More cyclones in the Indian Ocean, increasing risks for coastal areas.
- Possible agricultural disruptions due to heavy rainfall, floods, and delayed harvesting.

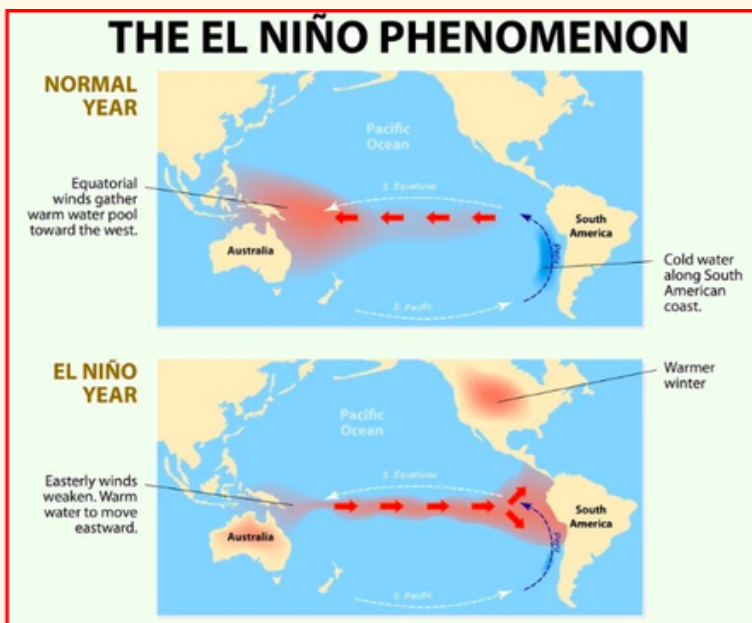
### ‘Bombay’ Blood Group

**News:** In a rare and complex medical procedure, a 30-year-old woman with the extremely rare ‘Bombay’ (hh) blood group underwent a successful kidney transplant in India.

#### About ‘Bombay’ Blood Group

- It is one of the rarest blood groups in the world and was first discovered in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), India, in 1952 by Dr. Y.M. Bhende.
- In the Bombay blood group (hh phenotype), individuals lack the H antigen completely. This means they cannot receive blood from any ABO group, including O.
  - Most blood groups (A, B, AB, and O) depend on the presence of the H antigen, which forms the basis of the ABO system.
- It is more commonly found in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and some Middle Eastern regions due to genetic inheritance patterns.
- Blood Transfusion: People with this blood group can donate blood to any ABO group, but they can only receive blood from another Bombay blood group individual.

BLOOD GROUPS					
	Type A	Type B	Type AB	Type O	Type Bombay O
Antigen (on RBC)	Antigen A	Antigen B	Antigen A + B	Antigen H	No Antigen
Antibody (in plasma)	Anti-B Antibody	Anti-A Antibody	Neither Antibody	Anti-A & Anti-B	Anti-A, Anti-B and Anti-H
Cannot donate	O, B, Bombay O	O, A, Bombay O	O, A, B, Bombay O	Bombay O	
Can donate	A, AB	B, AB	AB	O, A, B, AB	O, A, B, AB Bombay O
Can receive	A, O	B, O	AB, A, B, O	O	Bombay O



### Liquidity Coverage Ratio

#### In News

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to defer the implementation of the revised Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) norms.
- **Liquidity Coverage Ratio:** LCR aims to enhance the banking sector's resilience by ensuring that banks hold sufficient liquid assets to survive a 30-day period of severe liquidity stress.
- It is a key regulatory requirement under the Basel III framework, designed to ensure that banks maintain an adequate level of high-quality liquid assets (HQLA).
- Basel III Requirements: The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) introduced LCR in 2010, post the 2008 financial crisis, to improve banks' liquidity risk management.



## Earth's Inner Core is Undergoing Structural Changes

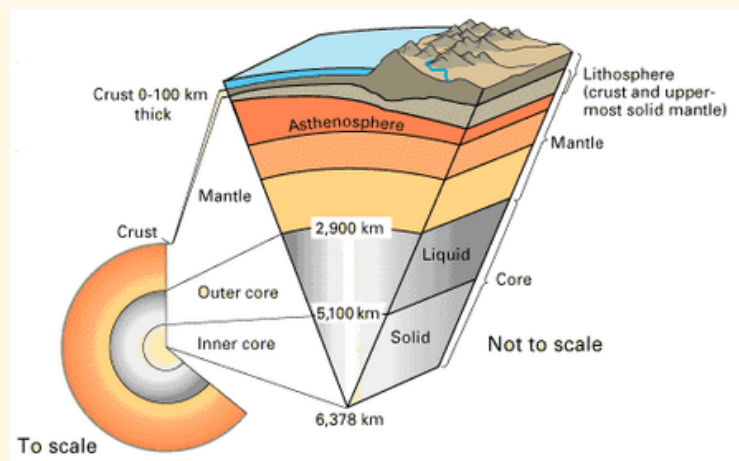
**News :** A recent study published in Nature Geoscience suggests that the Earth's inner core is undergoing structural changes.

### About the Study

- **Methodology:** Researchers used seismic waves (shockwaves from earthquakes) to examine Earth's internal layers.
  - These waves help visualize the Earth's internal structure, similar to how CT scans work for the human body.
- **Observations Made:**
  - Scientists previously assumed Earth's inner core was solid and rigid. New findings suggest it is softer near the surface.
  - The solid inner core is being influenced by the turbulent molten outer core. This interaction might be altering its rotation and affecting Earth's day-length.
  - Earlier, it was believed that the inner core rotates independently due to interactions with the mantle. The study suggests that this rotation is now slowing down.

### About Earth's Layers: Earth has three main layers:

- **Crust:** The outermost, thinnest layer (5-35 km thick), made of silica and alumina (sial) on continents and silica and magnesium (sima) in oceans.
- **Mantle:** Extends to 2,900 km; includes the semi-molten asthenosphere (source of magma) and solid lower mantle. The lithosphere consists of the crust and upper mantle.
- **Core:** Starts at 2,900 km depth; composed of nickel and iron (nife). The outer core is liquid, while the inner core is solid and highly pressurized.



## Parliamentary Panel's Recommendations to Curb Stubble Burning

**News:** A parliamentary panel has suggested implementing a minimum price mechanism for paddy residue to discourage stubble burning, akin to the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops.

### Stubble Burning Issues

- Causes severe air pollution, worsening smog, respiratory diseases, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Harms soil fertility and increases chemical fertilizer reliance.

### Why Farmers Burn Stubble

- Time constraints and high alternative method costs push farmers to burn residue.
- Lack of a fixed market price for paddy straw makes it unprofitable.

### Key Recommendations

1. **Minimum Price for Paddy Residue:** Establish an annual minimum price to cover farmers' collection costs.
2. **Subsidies:** Provide subsidies for machinery like happy seeders to aid residue management.
3. **Promotion of Short-Duration Varieties:** Encourage state governments to promote short-duration paddy varieties.
4. **National Bioenergy Policy:** Integrate agricultural residue into bioenergy production.
5. **Additional Measures:** Support for crop residue management costs, financial incentives, and awareness campaigns.

## The Income-tax Bill, 2025

**News:** The government has proposed a new bill to repeal and replace the 60-year-old Income-tax Act, 1961, with a simpler and more efficient tax framework.

### Key Features

- **Simplified Language:** Easier-to-understand legal text.
- **Consolidation:** Reduces fragmentation and obsolete provisions.
- **Crypto as Property:** Virtual assets like cryptocurrencies classified as capital assets.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Clearer guidelines for dispute resolution and decisions.
- **Capital Gain Exemptions:** Removal of Section 54E, eliminating exemptions for capital gains before April 1992.
- **Tax Year:** Defines the tax year as a 12-month period starting April 1.

**Conclusion:** The bill will be reviewed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance and, once approved, will take effect in April 2026.

## Protein Deficiency in Rural India: Key Findings

**News:** A study by ICRISAT reveals widespread protein deficiency in rural India despite the availability of protein-rich foods.

### Key Findings

- Over two-thirds of households in semi-arid regions consume less protein than recommended.
- Diets rely heavily on rice and wheat, contributing 60-75% of daily protein intake.
- Protein-rich foods like pulses, dairy, eggs, and meat remain underutilized due to cultural preferences, lack of nutritional awareness, and financial constraints.
- Even wealthier families often fail to meet recommended protein levels.
- The Public Distribution System (PDS) improves calorie intake but reinforces cereal-dominant diets.

## Recommendations

- Increase pulses, millets, and protein-dense foods in food programs.
- Promote region-specific strategies and nutrition education.
- Encourage farmers to grow diverse nutrient-rich crops.

**About ICRISAT:** ICRISAT is a leading agricultural research institute focusing on food security in semi-arid tropics. Established in 1972, its headquarters are in India.

## India's FDI Policy Framework

**News:** The Government has created a transparent and predictable FDI policy framework to attract foreign investments.

### What is FDI?

FDI refers to investments by foreign entities in the business interests of another country, typically involving ownership or control of enterprises. It's restricted in sectors like lottery, gambling, chit funds, real estate, and tobacco manufacturing.

### FDI Routes

- **Automatic Route:** No prior approval required; sectors like manufacturing and software fall here.
- **Government Approval Route:** Requires prior approval; sectors like telecom, media, and pharmaceuticals are covered.

### Key Features

- **Automatic Route:** Accounts for 90% of FDI inflows, reducing regulatory hurdles.
- **Sectoral Liberalization:** Relaxations in sectors like Defense, Telecom, and Space.
- **Insurance Reforms:** Increase in sectoral cap from 74% to 100% under certain conditions.
- **Competitive Federalism:** Promotes business ecosystems and logistics across states.

### Importance of FDI

- Bridges the current account deficit.
- Supports currency stability and technology transfer.
- Boosts production, exports, and employment.

### Government Initiatives

- Liberalized FDI policies, such as increased caps in defense and insurance.
- Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes in various sectors.
- Infrastructure and digital reforms for better connectivity.

## Gross Domestic Knowledge Product

**News:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) discussed the conceptual framework for measuring GDKP.

### What is GDKP?

Proposed by Prof. Umberto Sulpasso and Prof. Jeff Cole, GDKP measures the knowledge generated and utilized within an economy, complementing GDP. It assesses economic growth and potential based on four pillars:

- **Knowledge Items (Ki):** Identifying cultural and intellectual contributions.

- **Knowledge Producing Matrix (CKPM):** Evaluating knowledge produced by various sectors.
- **Knowledge User Matrix (CKUM):** Measuring demand for knowledge in society.
- **Cost of Learning:** Used for government budget decisions.

**Significance:** GDKP aims to quantify the impact of knowledge, innovation, and intellectual assets on India's economy, offering a broader view of growth driven by research and technology.

## Sant Guru Ravidas

**News:** PM Modi paid tributes to Sant Guru Ravidas on his birth anniversary.

### About

- Guru Ravidas, a 15th-16th century saint of the Bhakti movement, advocated unity, devotion, and service to humanity. He was a disciple of Sant Kabir and founded the Ravidassia religion.
- Life and Teachings
- Ravidas fought against caste discrimination and promoted equality, love, and brotherhood. His message of 'karma' is reflected in the saying "Mann Changa to Kathauti Mein Ganga" (If your mind is pure, the Ganges is in your tub).

**Legacy:** His devotional verses are part of the Guru Granth Sahib and the Panch Vani text. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar incorporated Ravidas's values into the principles of India's Constitution.

## Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati

**News:** PM Modi paid tributes to Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati on his birth anniversary.

**About:** Born on February 12, 1824, in Gujarat, Dayanand founded Arya Samaj in 1875 to promote social reforms and education, challenging social inequities and orthodox practices.

### Core Beliefs

- Rejected idolatry and ritualistic traditions in Hinduism.
- Advocated for women's education, opposed child marriage, and untouchability.
- Promoted Vedic principles, monotheism, and simple rituals.

### Social Impact

- Advocated cow protection, leading to the Gaurakshini Sabha (1882).
- Founded DAV schools promoting education with cultural and religious values.
- Popularized "swaraj" (self-rule), later adopted by leaders like Tilak and Gandhi.

### Philosophy of Arya Samaj

- Believed caste should be based on individual talent, not heredity.
- His ideas influenced India's New Education Policy of 2020.

## Deepwater 'Space Station' in South China Sea

**News:** China has approved the construction of a deepwater research facility in the South China Sea, to be operational by 2030.

### About

- The facility will be a cold seep ecosystem research station, located 2,000 meters below the surface.
- It will be one of the world's deepest and most advanced underwater installations.

### South China Sea

- A vital maritime route linking the Pacific and Indian Oceans, rich in oil, gas, and fisheries.
- Surrounded by nations including China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, and others.

### Dispute

- China's territorial claims conflict with ASEAN nations over islands and resources, impacting navigation and air traffic.

### India's Position

- India supports claimant nations like the Philippines and Vietnam and aims to secure energy resources and strengthen ties via its Look East Policy.

## Einstein Ring Discovery

**News:** The ESA's Euclid space telescope has discovered an Einstein ring around a galaxy 590 million light-years away.

### What is an Einstein Ring?

An Einstein ring is a circular light formation caused by gravitational lensing, where a massive object bends light from a more distant object behind it. This is based on Einstein's theory of general relativity.

### Significance

- Probing Dark Matter: Einstein rings help detect the gravitational influence of dark matter, which doesn't emit light.
- Studying Distant Galaxies: They enable the observation of galaxies that are otherwise too faint or far.
- Cosmic Expansion Insights: The bending of light provides data on the universe's expansion.

## BrahMos NG (Next Generation) Missile

**News:** The BrahMos NG missile system marks a major advancement in India's defense capabilities and international relations.

### About BrahMos NG

- A joint India-Russia project, the BrahMos NG retains the same 290 km range and Mach 3.5 speed as its predecessor but is lighter (1.6 tonnes) and smaller (6m).
- It can be launched from various platforms like the Sukhoi-30MKI and Tejas fighter aircraft and includes a homemade AESA radar.
- First test flight expected in 2025-26.

### Strategic Importance

- India delivered the first batch of BrahMos to the Philippines in 2024, a \$375 million deal signed in 2022.
- Advanced negotiations with Indonesia for a \$450 million deal.
- Several nations in Africa and West Asia have shown interest in acquiring BrahMos NG.

## Gangasagar Mela 2025

**News:** The West Bengal government has announced comprehensive preparations for the Gangasagar Mela 2025.

### About

- Sagar Island is situated at the mouth of the Bay of Bengal about 120 km from the State capital Kolkata.
- It is the largest island in the Sundarbans archipelago.
- Lakhs of pilgrims visit the island every year to participate in the religious fair and take a dip at the confluence of the Ganga and the sea on the occasion of Makar Sankranti.
- The site is considered sacred and is home to the Kapil Muni temple.

## Free Movement Regime (FMR)

**Context:** 22 crossing points along the Myanmar border have become operational under the updated Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement.

### About FMR

- The FMR allows border residents to visit relatives on the other side without needing a visa or passport.
- Introduced in 1968 to accommodate ethnic and familial ties between communities on both sides of the largely unfenced northeastern border.
- Initially set to 40 km, the free movement limit was reduced to 16 km in 2004, further cut to 10 km by 2016, with additional regulations.
- Border passes are issued with biometric verification and checked against a centralized portal. Assam Rifles handle the initial checks, with state police conducting further checks at the residence.

**Status:** Despite the Home Minister's announcement to scrap FMR, no formal suspension orders have been issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

**Fact:** The India-Myanmar border spans across Arunachal Pradesh (520 km), Nagaland (215 km), Manipur (398 km), and Mizoram (510 km).





## PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

What are the key drivers of the India-US strategic partnership?

- a) Shared democratic values and economic cooperation
- b) Military alliances and mutual defense pacts
- c) Cultural ties and tourism
- d) Common climate change goals

Which space telescope discovered the Einstein ring around a galaxy located nearly 590 million light-years from Earth?

- a) Hubble Space Telescope
- b) James Webb Space Telescope
- c) Euclid Space Telescope
- d) Chandra X-ray Observatory

BrahMos NG is a supersonic cruise missile developed under a joint venture between India and which country?

- a) Russia
- b) United States
- c) Israel
- d) France

The Gangasagar Mela is celebrated annually in which state of India?

- a) Uttar Pradesh
- b) West Bengal
- c) Bihar
- d) Odisha

How does La Nina impact global warming?

- a) It accelerates global warming by increasing greenhouse gas emissions
- b) It temporarily cools the surface temperatures of the Pacific Ocean, potentially delaying some effects of global warming
- c) It has no significant impact on global temperatures
- d) It leads to the reversal of global warming trends

The IMEC project aims to enhance which of the following?

- a) Trade and connectivity between India, Europe, and the Middle East
- b) Military cooperation between India and the Middle East
- c) Research and development in renewable energy
- d) Cultural exchange programs between India and Europe

What is the argument against judicial overreach regarding executive appointments?

- a) It undermines the independence of the judiciary
- b) It leads to excessive control of the executive over the judiciary
- c) It violates the separation of powers
- d) It reduces the accountability of elected representatives

Which organization releases the annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)?

- a) United Nations
- b) World Bank
- c) Transparency International
- d) Amnesty International

The Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement between India and Myanmar allows residents to move freely within which distance from the border?

- a) 16 km
- b) 10 km
- c) 5 km
- d) 20 km

Which of the following countries is the largest importer of Indian pharmaceutical products?

- a) United States
- b) United Kingdom
- c) China
- d) Germany

China's deepwater 'space station' is expected to be operational by which year?

- a) 2025
- b) 2028
- c) 2030
- d) 2035

In which year did Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati establish the Arya Samaj?

- a) 1857
- b) 1875
- c) 1890
- d) 1901

Which river is affected by China's dam project in the Tibetan Plateau, which has raised concerns in downstream countries?

- a) Brahmaputra
- b) Ganges
- c) Yangtze
- d) Mekong

The Election Commission of India has recommended a lifetime ban on politicians convicted in which kind of cases?

- a) Corruption-related cases
- b) Terrorism-related cases
- c) Anti-national activities
- d) All of the above

The Bombay blood group is a rare blood group found mainly in which population?

- a) African
- b) Asian
- c) European
- d) Latin American

Sant Guru Ravidas was a disciple of which famous saint?

- a) Sant Kabir
- b) Sant Tukaram
- c) Guru Nanak
- d) Sant Eknath

In which year was President's Rule imposed in Manipur due to the ongoing unrest?

- a) 2016
- b) 2022
- c) 2024
- d) 2023

What scientific phenomenon does an Einstein ring illustrate?

- a) Quantum mechanics
- b) Gravitational lensing
- c) The speed of light
- d) Electromagnetic waves

According to the NITI Aayog's report, which state has the highest number of underperforming public universities?

- a) Uttar Pradesh
- b) West Bengal
- c) Maharashtra
- d) Tamil Nadu

Which European country is collaborating with India on the IMEC project?

- a) Germany
- b) France
- c) United Kingdom
- d) Italy

Border passes under the Free Movement Regime (FMR) are issued with which of the following security measures?

- a) Biometric verification
- b) Aadhar card authentication
- c) Passport and visa checks
- d) Facial recognition

Which of the following is the main framework under which India and the United States collaborate in defense and security matters?

- a) Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA)
- b) Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)
- c) US-India Civil Nuclear Deal
- d) Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

The India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) project is being developed with cooperation from which European country?

- a) Germany
- b) France
- c) United Kingdom
- d) Italy

What is the primary scientific purpose of China's deepwater 'space station' in the South China Sea?

- a) To study the effects of global warming
- b) To observe and research cold seep ecosystems
- c) To monitor seismic activity in the region
- d) To test new underwater defense technologies

What is the primary rationale behind imposing a lifetime ban on convicted politicians?

- a) To ensure the integrity of the electoral process
- b) To discourage political participation by convicted individuals
- c) To prevent the rise of corruption in the political system
- d) To promote a healthy democracy

## Mains Practice Questions

1. Discuss the key factors driving India's pharmaceutical exports and the challenges faced by the sector in the global market. What measures can the government take to enhance the growth of pharmaceutical exports?
2. Examine the evolution of the India-US strategic partnership over the last two decades. How has this relationship impacted regional security and economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific?
3. Critically analyze the NITI Aayog report on the performance of state public universities in India. What are the key recommendations made in the report to improve their quality and relevance?
4. Discuss the significance of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) in assessing governance in India. How can India improve its standing in this index while strengthening transparency and accountability in the public sector?
5. Analyze the causes and consequences of the ongoing unrest in Manipur. How does the imposition of President's Rule affect the state's political autonomy and governance?
6. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is a significant infrastructure project. Discuss the strategic, economic, and geopolitical importance of this collaboration between India and France.
7. Evaluate the implications of imposing a lifetime ban on politicians convicted of serious crimes. Do you think this measure would strengthen the democratic process in India? Justify your answer with examples.
8. China's construction of dams on rivers like the Brahmaputra has raised concerns in downstream countries, including India. Discuss the potential environmental and geopolitical consequences of these projects.
9. Critically examine the concept of judicial overreach in the context of the Chief Justice of India's involvement in executive appointments. What are the implications for the separation of powers in India?
10. Explain the phenomenon of La Nina and its effects on global weather patterns. How does it interact with the process of global warming, and what implications does this have for climate change?
11. Discuss the life and teachings of Sant Guru Ravidas. How did his message challenge the social inequalities of his time, and what relevance do his teachings have in contemporary India?
12. Analyze the contributions of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati in promoting social and educational reforms in India. How did his philosophy influence India's modern nationalist movements?
13. The Gangasagar Mela is one of the largest religious gatherings in India. Analyze the socio-economic and environmental impacts of this event, and discuss the measures that can be taken to ensure sustainable management of such large-scale gatherings.
14. Evaluate the Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement between India and Myanmar. What are its benefits and challenges, and how can it be strengthened to foster better border management and people-to-people connectivity?