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ANALYSIS**



JUNE 27



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TEL AVIV, BEIRUT HAD BEEN DISCUSSING POTENTIAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON

Israel, Lebanon sign framework peace deal after US-brokered talks

Talks aim to end fighting between Israel, Hezbollah

Reuters

Jerusalem, Beirut, Washington, June 26

ISRAEL AND Lebanon signed a framework agreement in Washington on Friday following several days of talks to secure an end to fighting between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants. Lebanese Ambassador Nada Moawad and her Israeli counterpart Yechiel Leiter signed the trilateral document with the US at the State Department in Washington.

"Today we've taken the first step in what will be a difficult journey, without a doubt, but an important and an essential and a necessary one," US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said before the agreement was inked.

The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah broke out when the armed group fired at Israel on March 2, days after the US and Israel attacked Iran.

The Hezbollah attacks triggered Israeli air and ground attacks that have killed more than



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, State Department Counselor Daniel Holler, Israeli Ambassador Yechiel Leiter and Lebanese Ambassador Nada Hamadeh sign a framework deal in Washington, on Friday. REUTERS

4,000 people in Lebanon and displaced more than a million.

The officials did not provide details of the framework deal and did not say how its terms would differ from those included in an April 16 ceasefire deal that preceded several rounds of US-brokered Israel-Lebanon talks.

"The trilateral framework we signed today is a first step on the road to restoring Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity,

securing a permanent and final cessation of hostilities, enabling our people to go back to their land, and allowing all Lebanese to live in peace, security, and prosperity," Moawad said.

Leiter praised Moawad for negotiating like a "lioness."

"In this performance-based trilateral framework agreement, Iran is out, Hezbollah is out, and the road to peace between Israel and Lebanon is in," he said.

They did not take questions

from reporters.

Israel's death toll from this round of hostilities with Hezbollah includes at least 32 soldiers and four Israeli civilians. Hezbollah does not release figures on its war dead. Reuters reported on May 4 that several thousand Hezbollah fighters had been killed in the war.

The talks in Washington have included discussions on a proposal for Israeli forces to hand some of the territory they

occupied in southern Lebanon to Lebanon's military.

A State Department official told Reuters on Thursday that Israel had agreed to pull back from some of that territory, something Israeli and Lebanese officials denied.

Before the talks resumed this week, Israel and Hezbollah agreed to halt fire even as Israel kept troops in occupied southern Lebanon -- territory it describes as a "buffer zone" aimed at thwarting Hezbollah attacks on northern Israel.

Violence has persisted since the ceasefire, with Israel saying on Friday its troops had struck and killed what the military described as seven Hezbollah members who were operating near the territory it is occupying. Reuters could not confirm this.

Israeli forces dropped leaflets over the southern Lebanese town of Mansouri on Friday ordering residents to leave. Lebanese state media reported, the first such order issued since the latest ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah took effect.

A senior Lebanese military official said Israel had recently added Mansouri to its occupation zone. The official said Lebanese farmers had continued to enter and leave the town, but had not been living there.

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Framework Agreement:** A preliminary, legally non-binding or semi-binding trilateral or bilateral document that establishes the broad principles, objectives, and parameters for future detailed negotiations.
- **Buffer Zone:** A neutral zonal area established between two or more entities or nations to prevent direct military friction, conflict, or unauthorized cross-border incursions.
- **Trilateral Diplomacy:** Diplomatic negotiations conducted among three distinct parties to resolve complex regional deadlocks, typically involving two conflicting states and one powerful external mediator.
- **Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty:** The principle under international law that forbids states from invading or altering the borders of another sovereign state, maintaining that a government has supreme authority over its domestic territory.
- **Cessation of Hostilities:** A formal, often temporary or conditional agreement between warring factions to halt active military operations, airstrikes, and ground combat while a long-term political settlement is brokered.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**

- The core architecture of the recent diplomatic breakthrough centers on transitioning a volatile border region from non-state militant friction to institutional state-to-state stabilization.

- **The Core Thesis**

- The central argument posits that a durable peace in the Levant can only be achieved by structurally decoupling border conflicts from broader regional proxy networks, thereby replacing non-state military actors with formal institutional state mechanisms.

- **Key Substantive Points**

- **Restoration of State Authority:** The agreement establishes that restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon is contingent upon putting the national military in charge of its southern borders, effectively phasing out foreign proxy influences.
- **The Strategic Withdrawal Formula:** A performance-based withdrawal system forms the core operational mechanic, where foreign forces agree to pull back from specified occupied "buffer zones" in exchange for clear security guarantees.
- **Humanitarian Repatriation:** A primary metric of success for the diplomatic framework is the safe, structured return of over a million internally displaced citizens to their native agricultural and urban lands.

- **Counterarguments and Persistent Friction Points**

- **The Reality of Ground Fractures:** While diplomats sign frameworks in Washington, localized violence often persists on the ground, characterized by targeted strikes, continuous military maneuvering, and the expansion of tactical occupation pockets.
- **Implementation Denials:** A stark divergence frequently exists between official state pronouncements of territorial pullback and the ground realities reported by defense personnel, signaling deep structural mistrust.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **The Catalyst Phase:** The immediate cycle of hostility erupted following external military strikes against Iranian facilities, which prompted immediate retaliatory cross-border rocket fire from aligned non-state actors in Lebanon.
- **The Escalation Phase (Post-March 2):** A rapid transition to conventional warfare occurred, marked by comprehensive air campaigns and ground incursions that resulted in massive displacement and heavy casualties on both sides.
- **The Intermediary Diplomatic Phase (April 16):** Realizing the unsustainable human and economic toll, international mediators successfully instituted a preliminary ceasefire, establishing the foundational parameters for high-level diplomatic engagement.
- **The Modern Framework Settlement (June 26):** After intense trilateral deliberations involving high-ranking diplomats, a comprehensive framework was inked to formalize the end of hostilities and outline the parameters of military withdrawal.

- **Way Forward**

- **Empowering the National Military:** The international community must prioritize training, funding, and equipping the formal Lebanese military. This ensures it has the institutional capacity to successfully take over security duties in the southern border zones as foreign forces pull back.
 - **Phasing Out Proxy Networks:** Long-term stability depends on systematically dismantling the financial, political, and logistical pipelines that allow external regional powers to operate through local non-state proxies.
 - **Setting Up Verifiable Monitoring Mechanisms:** The trilateral partners should establish a neutral, technology-driven monitoring commission. Using real-time satellite imaging and joint border checkpoints can quickly detect and report violations, preventing localized skirmishes from derailing the broader agreement.
 - **Implementing a Structured Return for Displaced Persons:** A comprehensive, well-funded resettlement program must be launched immediately. This includes clearing unexploded ordnance, restoring basic utilities, and providing financial aid to help the million-plus displaced individuals safely return and rebuild their lives.
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WEST GEOPOLITICS: Comprehensive Analysis for UPSC CSE & APSC

1. FOUNDATIONAL GEOPOLITICAL FRAMEWORK



Framework Agreement

Preliminary principles, non-binding parameters



Buffer Zone

Neutral zonal area, preventing direct military friction



Trilateral Diplomacy

negotiations involving conflicting states and an external mediator

2. MAIN ARGUMENTS & SUBSTANTIVE PARTS

Durable Peace through decoupling border conflicts from proxy networks, replacing non-state actors with state mechanisms

Restoration of State Authority
(National Military Control)

Strategic Withdrawal Formula
(Performance-based pullbacks)

Humanitarian Repatriation
(Structured return of 1M+ displaced)

5. MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS



3. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT



4. LOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BASES

Realist Paradigm (State Survival)



Buffer zones as spatial defensive borders for geographic insulation

Liberal Institutional View (Sovereignty)



Reinforcing administrative legitimacy & territorial monopoly

6. NCERT & UPSC CSE SYLLABUS LINKAGES



Class XII Security

Class XII Int. Organizations

Class XI Peace Theory

GS Paper 2 (IR)

GS Paper 2 (IR)

GS Paper 3 (Internal)

GS Paper 3 Security

GS Paper 4 (Ethics)

PSIR Optional

9. PREVIOUS YEARS' QUESTIONS (MODELS)

Prelims Qs: 1. Regions (e.g., Mansouri) & Countries
2. Term "Framework Agreement"

Mains Qs: 3. West Asian instability & India's security
4. Non-state armed actors vs sovereignty

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Goldman Sachs hikes India's FY27 growth forecast to 6.5%

ENS Economic Bureau
Mumbai, June 26

GLOBAL INVESTMENT and financial services firm Goldman Sachs has raised its calendar year 2026 real GDP growth forecast for India by 30 basis points to 6.8% and FY27 forecast by 40 bps to 6.5% in the wake of the fall in crude oil prices.

The recent US-Iran peace deal should improve India's growth outlook — lower oil prices have taken out the risk of additional fuel pass-through to consumers, while easing supply constraints were already beginning to support a recovery in investment related indicators in May from their March-April troughs, the firm said in a report. On June 5, the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee lowered the growth projection from 6.9% to 6.6% and hiked the inflation forecast from 4.6% to 5.1%. International benchmark Brent crude futures for August were 3.2% lower at \$72.83 a barrel on Friday.

"While the fuel price hikes already announced will continue to feed through into inflation over the coming months, the lower oil price path suggests that the risk of additional pass-through has diminished materially," Goldman Sachs said.

The firm said lower crude oil prices have also been accompanied by a decline in petrochemical product prices.

"Although the earlier increases in polymer price are still likely to lift core goods inflation in the near term, we now expect the impact to be limited (vs. our earlier expectations), with a lower likelihood of incremental price increases across the core goods basket," it said. Reflecting the lower oil price assumptions

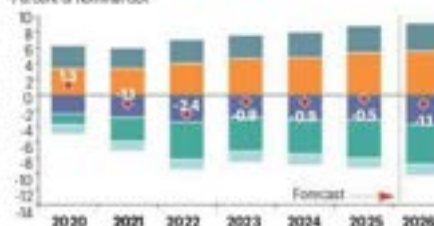
OIL BOOST

Services Trade Balance
Oil Trade Balance
Primary Income

Current Account Deficit

Secondary Income
Non oil Trade Balance
Current Account Balance

Percent of nominal GDP



NOTE: PRIMARY INCOME REFERS TO RECEIPT OR PAYMENT OF INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS
SECONDARY INCOME: GIC, GOLDMAN SACHS GLOBAL INVESTMENT RESEARCH

and reduced manufactured goods inflation pressures, Goldman Sachs lowered its core goods inflation forecast for FY26 and FY27 by 30 basis points and 50 bps each to 3.2% and 4.1% respectively.

"Going forward, we expect consumption growth to moderate in Q2 and Q3 on earlier pump fuel price increases. We have also seen deterioration in the RBI's urban and rural consumer confidence surveys (90.7 in May vs. 93.2 in April for the urban confidence index)," Goldman Sachs said.

However, the recent decline in oil prices reduces the likelihood of further fuel price increases, implying no further incremental drag on consumption growth from Q4, it said.

Further, the sharp correction in global urea prices is likely to limit the increase in the government's fertilizer subsidy

bill relative to the earlier expectations. "Recent import tenders have cleared at substantially lower prices than those seen at the peak of the Middle East conflict, prompting the government to indicate that the FY27 fertilizer subsidy requirement could be reassessed. Together with lower oil prices, this should help alleviate near-term fiscal pressures," it said.

Goldman Sachs said the Indian economy remained resilient through the West-Asia shock, as fiscal and quasi-fiscal measures absorbed much of the increase in energy costs and limited pass-through to consumers. As a result, consumption held up in March and April, even as investment somewhat softened amid supply disruptions and commercial LPG allocations remained around 70% of pre-conflict levels, it said.

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Basis Points (bps):** A standard unit of measure for interest rates and other percentages in finance, where 1 basis point is equal to 0.01% (or 1/100th of a percent). For instance, if an agency upwardly revises a nation's GDP growth forecast from 6.1% to 6.5%, it represents a substantial increase of 40 basis points, eliminating any ambiguity that could arise from using percentages directly.
- **Real Gross Domestic Product (Real GDP):** This reflects the total monetary value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders during a specific period, adjusted for the distorting effects of inflation. By utilizing a base year's constant prices, Real GDP provides an accurate representation of a nation's actual physical output expansion, distinct from nominal increases driven purely by rising prices.
- **Current Account Deficit (CAD):** A vital measurement of a country's trade and financial health, occurring when the total value of imported goods, services, and transfers exceeds the total value of exported ones. The current account is structurally divided into distinct sub-components:
 - *Services Trade Balance:* The net earnings from cross-border services (such as IT, software, and financial consulting), which traditionally run a surplus in India.
 - *Oil and Non-Oil Trade Balance:* The net difference between imports and exports of merchandise, explicitly isolating volatile energy items from standard manufacturing and agricultural commodities.
 - *Primary Income:* The net flow of profits, dividends, and interest payments moving into or out of a country via foreign investments.
 - *Secondary Income:* Unilateral transfers that require no reciprocal service, primarily dominated by inbound worker remittances from the global diaspora.
- **Core Goods Inflation:** A refined consumer price index that tracks price movements across a specific basket of tangible commodities while deliberately excluding highly volatile sectors such as food and energy. This metric allows policymakers to gauge underlying, long-term inflationary pressures across the domestic manufacturing sector.
- **Fuel Pass-Through:** The mechanism and velocity with which fluctuations in international crude oil prices are transmitted down to retail domestic consumers. When a government or oil marketing companies absorb global shocks rather than implementing an immediate pass-through, they protect private consumption but invariably strain public finances.
- **Fertilizer Subsidy:** Financial assistance granted by the union government to domestic manufacturing units and importers to ensure that essential agricultural inputs, particularly urea, remain accessible to farmers at controlled, affordable prices. This fiscal outgo is directly linked to international chemical and natural gas price benchmarks.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**

- The structural architecture of India's macroeconomic performance is profoundly intertwined with global commodity cycles. An analytical breakdown reveals several interconnected arguments concerning growth dynamics, inflationary channels, and fiscal balance:

- **Crude Oil as a Primary Macroeconomic Driver:** External geopolitical breakthroughs—such as diplomatic de-escalation in West Asia leading to Brent crude settling around \$72.83 a barrel—serve as direct catalysts for domestic economic expansion. Lower international oil prices immediately lower the sovereign import bill, mitigating external supply shocks and providing justification for major financial institutions to upgrade India's growth forecasts toward 6.5% for FY27.

- **The Mitigation of Inflationary Contagion:** A sustained drop in global petroleum prices systematically removes the compounding risk of retail fuel hikes. This cooling effect trickles down into the core goods basket, prompting downward revisions in core inflation projections (projected down to 3.2% for CY26). This trend softens input cost pressures for manufacturing corporations, creating an environment conducive to private capital expenditure.

- **Fiscal Relief Through Subsidy Rationalization:** The benefits of a downward trend in oil extend far beyond petrol pumps; they cause a parallel correction in international petrochemical and global urea prices. This synchronicity allows the central government to substantially lower its anticipated fertilizer subsidy allocations, alleviating near-term fiscal deficits and granting policymakers additional room to fund public infrastructure projects.

- **The Consumption Trajectory and Consumer Confidence:** Domestic private consumption exhibits a lagged response to energy shocks. While previous retail price hikes initially dampened urban and rural consumer confidence surveys, a prolonged phase of depressed global oil prices limits future price increases. This reduction in the incremental drag on household budgets paves the way for a consumption recovery in the latter half of the fiscal year.

- **Divergences in Macroeconomic Forecasting:** The analytical divergence between global investment firms (raising growth projections to 6.5%) and domestic monetary authorities like the RBI (which previously adjusted growth projections to 6.6% while raising inflation expectations to 5.1%) highlights the dynamic nature of economic forecasting. Global agencies react rapidly to real-time international supply-side inputs, whereas domestic institutions tend to prioritize cautious baseline adjustments to manage domestic liquidity and seasonal agricultural factors.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- The structural vulnerability of India's macroeconomic framework to external energy shocks is a long-standing historical challenge. Tracking this evolution outlines the nation's journey from acute vulnerability to relative systemic resilience:

- **The Early Decades and OPEC Shocks (1947–1980s):** Following independence, India pursued an import-substitution industrialization model. While domestic consumption was low, minimal domestic oil production meant that the OPEC supply shocks of 1973 and 1979 caused severe macroeconomic disruptions. These events triggered double-digit inflation, drained meager foreign exchange reserves, and highlighted the risk of foreign energy dependency.

- **The 1991 Watershed Balance of Payments Crisis:** The structural vulnerability reached a boiling point during the 1990–91 Gulf War. Spiking global crude oil prices, combined with a decline in remittances from West Asia, severely strained India's current account. With foreign reserves depleted to just a few weeks of imports, India faced a near-default situation, which ultimately catalyzed the historic LPG (Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization) structural reforms.

- **The Era of Administered Pricing and Gradual Decontrol (2000–2014):** For over a decade, the government utilized an Administered Price Mechanism (APM) to shield citizens from global volatility. However, this model led to massive under-recoveries for state-owned oil marketing companies and caused unsustainable fiscal deficits. Consequently, the government dismantled the APM, completely deregulating petrol prices in 2010 and diesel prices in 2014, linking retail pricing directly to global market dynamics.

- **The Adoption of Inflation Targeting and Subsidy Reforms (2015–Present):** The introduction of the statutory Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework under the Reserve Bank of India Act marked a major institutional shift. Concurrently, the government transitioned to a Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) regime for fertilizers and deployed direct benefit transfers. By 2026, these integrated policies successfully stabilized India's structural Current Account Deficit within a manageable range of -0.5% to -2.4% of GDP, establishing a resilient buffer against external volatility.

- **Way Forward**

- **Accelerating Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) Expansion:** India should quickly scale up its underground strategic oil storage capacities. Expanding phase-II commercial-cum-strategic facilities will allow the nation to stockpile crude during price drops (such as when Brent falls near \$72 a barrel), creating a stronger buffer against future supply disruptions in West Asia.

- **Decoupling the Agrarian Economy from Fossil Fuels:** The government should reduce the fiscal budget's vulnerability to global chemical shocks by accelerating the transition to sustainable farming models. Expanding the domestic production and adoption of nano-urea, alongside PM-PRANAM initiatives, can systematically lower the national dependence on imported fertilizer inputs.

- **Structural Deepening of Services and High-Tech Exports:** To structurally improve the Current Account Deficit, policy focus must extend beyond traditional software exports. Actively promoting high-value engineering services, global capability centers (GCCs), and electronics manufacturing via targeted PLI schemes will help generate consistent surpluses to offset the structural merchandise trade deficit.

- **Institutionalizing a Dynamic Fiscal-Monetary Coordination Shield:** Establishing an agile, data-driven framework between the Ministry of Finance and the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee can help optimize policy responses. When global energy prices drop, the state can strategically adjust windfall taxes or excise duties, balancing the goals of public capital expenditure with the need to pass price relief down to retail consumers.

COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS: INDIA'S MACRO-ECONOMIC GROWTH CATALYST

1 KEY CONCEPTS & DEFINITIONS



Real GDP

Real GDP: macro-economics napassly for macro conception of Oil



Current Account Deficit (CAD)

Four-components and four account coses to Dieficit

- Services Trade
- Oil Trade
- Primary Income
- Secondary Income



Core Goods Inflation

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Fuel Pass-Through

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Fertilizer Subsidy

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3 MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS GRID



SOCIAL

- Purchasing power protection
- Proteoving power protection



ETHICAL

- Purchasing power protection
- Ethical goods inflation



POLITICAL

- Ballot on ballot
- ballotlism
- Government ballot goves



INTERNATIONAL

- Global social international
- Government al governments



LEGAL

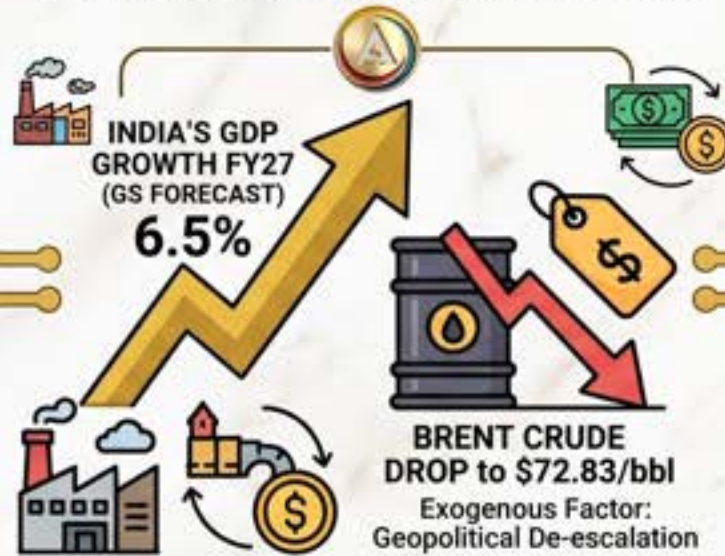
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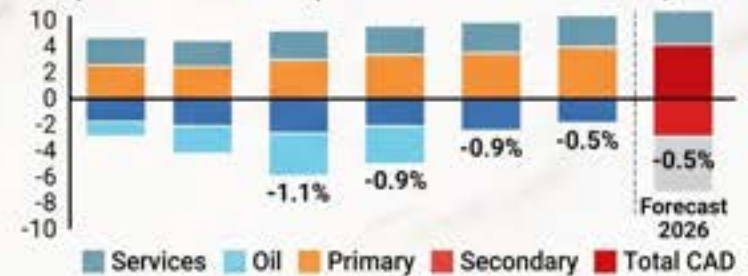
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THE OIL PRICE CATALYST AND INDIA'S GROWTH TRAJECTORY

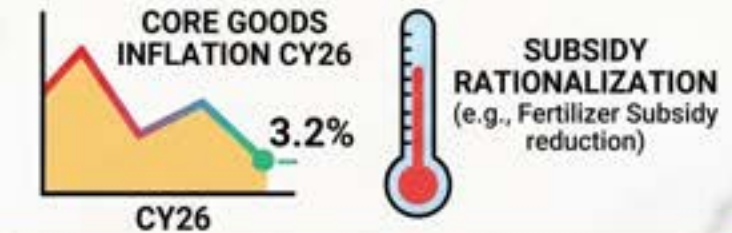


2 MACROECONOMIC IMPACT CHARTS

A) CAD TREND (% OF NOMINAL GDP)



B) INFLATION & FISCAL DRIVERS



4 PREPARATION ROADMAP & PYQs

PREPARATION PATHWAY

NCERT Linkages

- XII Macro Ch6
- XI Indian Econ

GS Syllabus Mapping

- GS1, 2, 3, 4

PAST YEAR QUESTIONS (PYQs)

Way Forward

- Consent for rarentic rebowed cargets
- Content our Architairoado/addatima
- Relevant forquesions PYQs

Relevant for UPSC and APSC exams

• POLICY

What a 'right to walk' can look like for India



EXPERT EXPLAINS
ARKAJ SINGH

FELLOW AT CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH,
NEW DELHI

LAST WEEK, the Supreme Court recognised walking on designated footpaths as a fundamental right and urged the government to introduce a law that declares this right. The two-judge bench's ruling came in a case involving the death of a schoolboy in a road accident.

India has the dubious distinction of having the world's highest number of road accident fatalities. The court identified this as the result of the exclusion of pedestrians in the way roads are built.

The issue of road safety is a type of 'bitter capsule', in which the use of public infrastructure by wealthier people is privileged over the needs of others. Pedestrians and cyclists (along with two-wheeler and public transport users) are more likely to be road accident victims than private car users. They are also likely to be poorer than private car users, and are forced to walk or cycle because they cannot afford any other option. These social divisions are exacerbated by the lack of safe roads. This absence worsens poorer peoples' quality of life and prospects, constrains children's access to school and playtime, and deprives adults of the health and well-being effects of walking in healthier neighbourhoods.

It is in this context that the right to walk needs to be considered — not just as something to be expected as a part of how roads are built, but rather as a fundamental right guaranteed through the right to 'move freely through the territory of India' and the 'right to life' under Articles 19(1)(d) and 21 of the Constitution.

But what precisely is the legal import of the right to walk, and how can it have a real effect on the ground? By insisting the right to walk into fundamental rights, the court has sent a boost for its development. The case at hand had limited scope, but after settling the immediate legal issues, the court asked for it to be edited as a writ petition. One caveat is that the issue of walking will be considered in more specific terms in this subsequent iteration.

• SHRINKING SPACE

Pedestrian deaths in the country have more than doubled in 10 years.



SOURCE: MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

Here's a look at some of the directions in which the right to walk can be developed, considering its social and cultural implications as well as implementation challenges.

Walking is cultural and social, not just about infrastructure

The Supreme Court has pointed out that "walking is not just motion" but embodies expressional, congregational and associational rights under Article 19(1)(a), Article 19(1)(b) and Article 29(1)(c).

To this, we can add the words of the incumbent mayor of Bogotá, Enrique Peñalosa, who said "sidewalks are the arteries of parks and plazas, not of streets." They are for conversation, socialising, doing business and children playing, as much as they are for individual autonomy and mobility.

The pedestrian "right of way" has to respond to the social and biophysical requirements of the human beings who use it. A pavement imagined as a sterile strip of infrastructure is not necessarily safer or comfortable for its users without shade-giving trees, places for rest, food and water, and "eyes on the street". The last of these is a concept developed by the urban theorist Jane Jacobs, who observed that public spaces become safer when more people — residents, shopkeepers, pedestrians, café patrons — are around.

When viewed in isolation from its social setting, the right to walk could easily run into conflict with the livelihood rights of hawkers. This, however, is a self-defeating understanding of the conception of walking, which includes cycling, walking, public transport, neighbourhood life and workday



Two-wheelers occupy a footpath on a Delhi bridge. PHOTO: ANAND KUMAR

commuters. However, to interpret a fundamental right in a way that does not value disabilities and lived realities of people would defeat the purpose of the Constitution.

The right to walk should not come at the cost of making people poorer, or by closing off avenues of everyday commerce, rest and refreshment. Social interactions and the exchange of news and views are all part of the life of pedestrians.

The presence of vendors and shade-giving trees on the roadside might seem inconvenient from an engineering point of view, but they are necessary accompaniments to our street life. Ideally, they should coexist alongside the pedestrian right of way. This is not an impossible task. It is secured through administrative intervention at the street level, by shifting vending spots a few paces here and there, working around the trees and planning spaces for rest and shade where they are not available.

The right to walk should not be limited to islands

Many of the social and cultural issues around walking are in fact taken into account in a batch of recent design-led projects such as Chandni Chowk and Anand Bharg in Delhi, Church Street and Gandhi Bazaar in Bengaluru and CG Road in Ahmedabad. But while these interventions are well intentioned, they tend to be small and piecemeal projects with limited geographical impact.

The Supreme Court's intervention on this issue nudges us in a different direction, to think about how walking as a fundamental right can be made a mainstreamed goal. For

this, it should be a vision where it is available budgets and resources. Perfect design-led solutions may have to be sacrificed for making conditions safer and more comfortable for pedestrians in every kind of setting.

This is not to say that pedestrian life does not need aesthetic imagination, but that form should follow functionality. It is more critical that people get networks of circulation — from home to the bus, work, school, or the market — rather than small islands of perfectly constructed space. Interventions should prioritise the needs of vulnerable groups and focus on places where there are lots of walkers, such as in the areas around schools, bus stands and train stations, labour chowks and low-income neighbourhoods.

Institutional fragmentation around pedestrian rights

There is a legal and institutional vacuum around the issue of walkability. The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 imposes duties on motorists via a 'vipeced' clause, but it is primarily a law for motor vehicles and cannot secure the public rights of pedestrians.

There are, separately, a number of engineering designs and standards of road safety that should be applied in road construction projects, but these are not legally enforceable and fall short of a right for pedestrians.

Toward this vacuum, the Supreme Court has sought a standalone framework for pedestrians in which municipalities, development authorities and parastatals are responsible for ensuring the right to walk. It has called for a regulatory structure through which the right can be implemented.

In many states, the current relationship of municipalities to governments is fragmented into a chaotic different tasks — tree pruning, sweeping, drainage, regulating hawkers — without responsibility for overall outcome. Municipalities also deal with governments side-by-side with other agencies: development authorities and public works departments construct many of the city roads, and electricity departments and water boards plant their infrastructure all over it (often blocking the way for walkers). The traffic police are responsible for policing the movement of cars, and municipalities run dedicated parking areas, but sometimes neither considers themselves accountable for cars parked on the pavement.

It would be impractical to unify these diverse functions into one administrative agency. It could, however, be the task of the municipality to integrate and pull together the various pieces of the puzzle to ensure a safe and comfortable right of way for walkers.

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Right to Walk:** A rights-based legal and developmental concept asserting that walking on safe, unobstructed, and demarcated footpaths is a fundamental extension of the right to life and personal liberty.
- **Elite Capture of Infrastructure:** A structural phenomenon where public resources, urban spaces, and infrastructure are disproportionately designed and allocated to serve the interests of wealthier socio-economic classes, often at the expense of marginalized groups.
- **Eyes on the Street:** A classic urban planning concept popularized by theorist Jane Jacobs. It posits that public spaces become inherently safer and more vibrant when there is a continuous, natural presence of people—such as street vendors, shopkeepers, and pedestrians—who act as informal, everyday guardians of the street.
- **Institutional Fragmentation:** A governance challenge where multiple public agencies operate within the same physical jurisdiction without centralized coordination, leading to accountability gaps and policy paralysis.
- **Pedestrian Right-of-Way:** The legal and spatial priority granted to pedestrians over motorized vehicles within shared urban transport networks, establishing walking as a primary mode of transit rather than an afterthought.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**

- The discourse surrounding urban space reimagines walking not merely as a mechanical action of movement, but as a core constitutional entitlement.

- **The Core Thesis**

- Urban transit policy must transition from a car-centric engineering approach to a human-centric, rights-based framework. True urban mobility cannot be achieved through isolated luxury beautification projects; it demands a comprehensive, legally enforceable ecosystem that recognizes walking as a socio-cultural right.

- **Key Pillars of Argumentation**

- **The Deadly Reality of Spatial Exclusion:** India suffers from a severe crisis of road fatalities. As illustrated by the official Ministry of Road Transport & Highways data trends within the file named ba3d3a3a-8b13-48c3-ae54-7b8f38120ece.jpg, pedestrian deaths have alarmingly more than doubled over a ten-year horizon—climbing relentlessly from 13,894 in 2015 to an astonishing 36,526 in 2024. This grim trajectory underscores a systemic failure to protect vulnerable road users.
- **Walking as a Multi-Faceted Constitutional Right:** Walking cannot be isolated from our democratic fabric. The judiciary notes that walking embodies expressional, congregational, and associational freedoms under Article 19(1)(a), (b), and (c). It directly underpins the freedom of movement under Article 19(1)(d) and the fundamental Right to Life under Article 21.
- **Socio-Economic Stratification of Streets:** The current layout of Indian roads mirrors deep class divisions. The wealthy navigate cities enclosed in private vehicles, while the working class, children, and elderly are forced to brave dangerous, broken pavements. Denying safe walking spaces restricts access to education, recreation, and livelihoods for the poor.
- **The Failure of "Isolated Islands" of Planning:** High-profile urban design projects—such as Delhi's Chandni Chowk redevelopment or Bengaluru's Church Street—are well-intentioned but remain isolated pockets. True urban circulation requires continuous, interconnected networks from home to work, school, and markets, rather than fragmented luxury zones.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **Pre-Independence Era (Traditional Walkable Cities):** Indian urban centers were historically built on a human scale. Bazaars, narrow lanes, and mixed-use neighborhoods naturally prioritized walking and non-motorized transport, blending commercial and residential spaces seamlessly.
- **Post-Independence to the 1970s (Early Master Planning):** Modernist urban planning principles took root, heavily influenced by Western car-centric designs. Cities like Chandigarh introduced strict zoning laws that separated living zones from commercial zones, increasing travel distances and laying the groundwork for motorized transport dependence.
- **The 1980s and 1990s (The Car Boom and Statutory Shift):** Economic liberalization triggered an explosion in private vehicle ownership. The landmark **Motor Vehicles Act of 1988** formalized this transition. The Act focused primarily on regulating motorists, licensing, and vehicular speed, leaving pedestrian safety and rights without any robust statutory protection.
- **The 2000s to 2010s (The Rise of Flyovers and Subways):** Urban transport policy focused heavily on infrastructure like flyovers, expressways, and foot-over-bridges. Pedestrians were systematically pushed underground into poorly maintained subways or forced onto steep overhead bridges, prioritizing uninterrupted vehicular flow over human comfort.
- **Present Day (The Judicial Turn toward Spatial Justice):** Recognizing the rising death toll on roads, the judiciary intervened. State courts, notably in Punjab and Haryana, alongside recent directives from the Supreme Court, have elevated walking from a civic amenity to a fundamental right under Article 21, forcing urban planners to reconsider standalone legislative frameworks for pedestrians.

- **Way Forward**

- **Enacting Standalone State-Level Legislation:** States should pioneer dedicated "Right to Walk" legislation. This would place a statutory obligation on municipal authorities to construct and maintain continuous, unobstructed footpaths, making pedestrian safety a legal mandate rather than a policy choice.
- **Unifying Urban Street Governance:** To overcome institutional fragmentation, cities need a single, unified urban transport and street management authority. Municipalities must lead this effort, integrating the actions of the Public Works Department (PWD), traffic police, and utility providers under a cohesive street governance framework.
- **Adopting Inclusive, Context-Specific Street Architecture:** Urban design must move past rigid engineering layouts. Pavements must accommodate both human movement and local social realities. This means intentionally designing street layouts with designated zones for street vendors, tree canopies for natural shade, and street furniture to create vibrant, self-policing public spaces.

I. KEY TERMS & DEEDS

RIGHT TO WALK



Is a fundamental extension of Art 21 (Life & Liberty).

ELITE CAPTURE



Infrastructure prioritizes private cars over other users.

EYES ON THE STREET



Public spaces made safer by natural presence of people and commerce

CORE THESIS

Shifting from car-centric engineering to a human-centric, rights-based framework for safe mobility

BEFORE

Car-Centric
(Speed > Safety)

AFTER

Human-Centric
(Safety > Speed)

II. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION & CONCEPTS

PRE-INDIPENDENCE

(Traditional Walkable Markets)

1980s-90s

MOTOR VEHICLES ACT
(Formalizes Car Culture)

2000s

FLYOVERS & SUBWAYS
(Pedestrian Exclusion)

PRESENT

JUDICIAL TURN

(Right to Walk recognized)

PHILOSOPHICAL BASE



Rawlsian Justice
(Equity for all)

Lefebvre's 'Right to the City'
(All socio-economic levels)

III. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL IMPACT



SOCIAL

Safe pathways for school children's independent mobility.



ECONOMIC

Reduction in road accidents, local economic stimulation.



LEGAL

Judicial interpretation connecting walking to Art 21 and 19.



ETHICAL

Duty of intergenerational equity, creating sustainable cities.



INTERNATIONAL

Lessons from Sweden's 'Vision Zero' and Bogota's street designs.



POLITICAL

Shifting focus from mega-flyovers to comprehensive city networks.

INCLUSIVE STREET DESIGN



IV. WAY FORWARD

- Enact Standalone State Law
- Unify Street Governance (to stop fragmentation)
- participatory audits,
- social budgeting.

ACADEMIC LINKAGES (NCERTs, UPSC GS PAPERS 1-4, ESSAY)



GS1: Urban Dynamics



GS1: Urban Dynamics



GS2: Fundamental Rights



GS3: Sustainable Infrastructure



GS4: Urban Planning Ethics

SAMPLE PYQS (Prelims, Mains)



SAMPLE PRELIMS QUESTION...
SAMPLE MAINS QUESTION...

• DIPLOMACY

From 5 Indians to 5% of population: Diaspora key to Seychelles ties

Divya A

New Delhi, June 26

IT WAS in 1770 that five Indians landed in Seychelles as plantation workers, along with seven African slaves and 15 French colonists, recorded as the first inhabitants of the Islands located in the Indian Ocean. Today, persons of Indian origin comprise 5% of the island nation's population.

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi heads to Seychelles on a three-day visit beginning Saturday, here is a look at the ties that bind the two countries located 4,000 km apart.

Migration and trade

It was from the 20th century that a constant flow of Indians, mostly from Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and later Gujarat, came to reside in Seychelles as traders, labourers and construction workers.

In fact, during the British colonial period, Seychelles was governed from the Bombay Presidency for some time, with regular shipping and flow of goods from

India. These trade links facilitated the migration of an Indian trading community looking for greener pastures, having reached a saturation point in East Africa.

The number of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) with Seychelles citizenship is estimated at around 6,000 presently, which is significant in a country with a population of about 120,000. A majority belong to the Gujarati and the Tamil communities.

Diplomatic relations

When Seychelles attained freedom on June 29, 1976, a contingent from the Indian Naval Ship, INS Nilgiri, took part in the Independence Day celebrations. This year, as PM Modi is attending the 50th Independence Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour, an Indian Armed Forces contingent and two Indian Navy ships are participating as well.

Diplomatic ties were established with Seychelles in 1976. Earlier this year, Modi also described Seychelles as a key part of India's maritime policy — Vision MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Se-

Globalsouth strategy

● Seychelles is an important part of India's Global South strategy, serving as a critical maritime partner in the Western Indian Ocean.

● The island nation also helps India combat seaborne terrorism, piracy, and illegal fishing.

● Situated close to Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, Seychelles serves as a vital counterweight against China's expanding influence in the Indian Ocean.

curity and Growth Across Regions).

Cultural ties

With a significant Indian diaspora, cultural contacts have been primarily community-driven. In June 2022, a statue of Mahatma Gandhi was erected at the Peace Park in Victoria, which also had statues of Nelson Mandela, the first President of South Africa and Sir James Mancham, the founding President of Seychelles.

Today, the Indian-origin community is visible in all walks of life, but mostly dominating the trading and construction sectors. There are also over 9,000 NRIs holding Gainful Employment Permits, working in in the construction sector, as shop assistants and as professionals.

In 2015, the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award was conferred on Justice D Karunakaran of the Supreme Court of Seychelles, becoming the second recipient from the country after V Ramadoss (2006), an entrepreneur and medical advisor to the Seychelles President.

PM's visit

PM Modi had earlier visited Seychelles in 2015, while the first Indian PM to visit Seychelles was Indira Gandhi in 1981. During his three-day visit, Modi will address the National Assembly of Seychelles and interact with members of the Indian community. Beyond cultural relations, India has emerged as one of Seychelles' most trusted development partners through grants, concessional credit and capacity-building initiatives. More than 1% of Seychelles' population has received professional training in India.

Over the years, New Delhi has extended significant Lines of Credit and grant assistance supporting infrastructure, healthcare, education and public transport.

This year, Modi also announced a Special Economic Package of \$175 million for Seychelles. India also continues to be a premier medical tourism destination for Seychelles, with institutional tie-ups connecting island hospitals with facilities in cities like Chennai.

- **Key Terms and Explanations**
- **Indian Diaspora (PIO vs. NRI):**
 - *Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)* refer to individuals who are not citizens of India but are of Indian ancestry or origin. In Seychelles, they constitute about 5% of the total population, representing a deeply integrated community holding local citizenship.
 - *Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)* are Indian citizens holding Indian passports but residing outside the country for employment or education. In Seychelles, over 9,000 NRIs operate on Gainful Employment Permits, primarily providing vital professional skills and labor in construction and retail.
- **Vision MAHASAGAR:** An acronym for *Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions*. Launched by India as an active evolution of its maritime doctrine, this concept emphasizes collective responsibility, security cooperation, and sustainable economic development among Indian Ocean littoral states.
- **Global South Strategy:** A geopolitical orientation focusing on the interests, equities, and leadership of developing and under-developed nations, primarily located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. India positions itself as a structural bridge and a powerful voice for the Global South by building asymmetric, non-reciprocal developmental partnerships.
- **Lines of Credit (LoC):** A development financing mechanism where India extends soft loans to recipient nations at highly concessional interest rates. Unlike commercial loans, LoCs are designed to support national infrastructure, healthcare, and capacity building without pushing small island nations into unsustainable debt traps.
- **Gainful Employment Permits (GEPs):** Specific legal and regulatory frameworks utilized by host nations to permit foreign nationals to enter, work, and contribute to local economic sectors, highlighting structured and legal migration pathways between nations.
- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**
- The core thesis of this geopolitical framework revolves around a simple yet profound reality: **small island nations in the Indian Ocean hold disproportionately large strategic value, and the diaspora acts as the ultimate bedrock of India's foreign policy calculus.**
- **The Core Strategic Arguments**
- **The Diaspora as an Organic Bridge:** The relationship is not merely a modern bureaucratic construct. It is rooted in a centuries-old shared history where the Indian community has evolved from initial plantation laborers into a highly influential economic and professional elite that influences local governance and policy.
- **Net Security Provider in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO):** India treats the maritime safety of the region as a shared, indivisible security architecture. Seychelles serves as a frontline partner in combating non-traditional security threats such as maritime terrorism, piracy, and Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- **Asymmetric Development Assistance:** India's partnership strategy avoids the transactional, heavy-handed approach often associated with major global powers. By offering grants, institutional capacity building, and a **\$175 million Special Economic Package**, India establishes itself as a reliable, benign development partner.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **The Genesis (1770s to 19th Century):** The initial footprint began in 1770 with the arrival of five Indian plantation workers alongside French colonists. Over the decades, under British colonial rule, Seychelles was closely linked to the British Indian administration, briefly falling under the administrative shadow of the **Bombay Presidency**. This facilitated a steady flow of Tamil and Gujarati traders who filled essential gaps in the island's emerging economy.
- **Post-Independence Alignment (1976):** When Seychelles achieved independence on June 29, 1976, India was among the first to welcome it into the community of nations. The symbolic presence of the Indian Naval Ship *INS Nilgiri* at their first Independence Day celebrations laid the groundwork for decades of maritime security cooperation.
- **The Era of High-Level Institutionalization (1981–2015):** Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's historic visit in 1981 anchored political ties. By 2015, the engagement evolved from simple cultural affinity into a structured maritime framework, recognizing the diaspora's role through major honors like the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman awarded to local legal and business leaders.
- **The Contemporary Era (2026):** Celebrating 50 years of independence, the bilateral equation has reached its peak. The relationship has successfully transitioned from basic cultural diplomacy into deep strategic integration, symbolized by India's presence as the Guest of Honour at their national celebrations and backed by substantial financial commitments.

- **Way Forward**

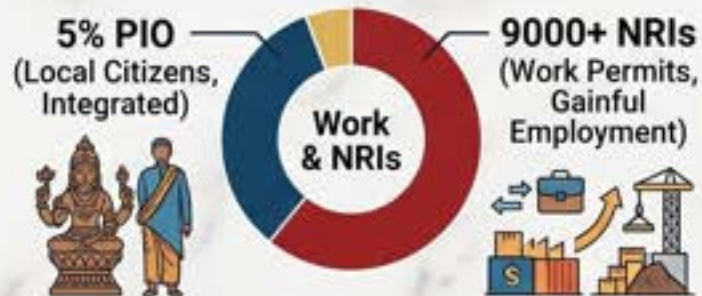
- **Accelerating Project Delivery:** India must continue to streamline its bureaucratic processes to ensure that development assistance and infrastructure projects are completed on schedule. Fast-tracking these initiatives helps reinforce India's reputation as a reliable and efficient partner.
- **Expanding Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA):** Security cooperation should move beyond standard naval visits toward real-time data sharing and integrated radar networks. Expanding joint coastal surveillance will make it easier to monitor and secure the region's vast Exclusive Economic Zones.
- **Institutionalizing the Diaspora for Business Integration:** While the diaspora remains culturally and politically engaged, there is an opportunity to better connect Indian businesses with local enterprises. Setting up dedicated business corridors can help drive deeper investment in sustainable coastal economies and renewable energy.
- **Expanding the Medical and Educational Footprint:** Building on the existing popularity of medical tourism to cities like Chennai, India could invest in localized, digital healthcare infrastructure and tele-medicine linkages. This would make high-quality care more accessible within the island nation while further strengthening local goodwill.

THE DIASPORA: FOUNDATION OF TIES

HISTORICAL MIGRATION (1770 Onwards)



PRESENT POPULATION (PIO & NRI)



Tamil, Gujarati, Puducherry communities

CULTURAL INTEGRATION



AXIA
IAS ACADEMY
RISE ABOVE THE REST



DEVELOPMENT & CAPACITY BUILDING

\$175 MILLION



LINES OF CREDIT (SOFT LOANS)



PROFESSIONAL TRAINING



1%
of Population Trained in India

UPSC/APSC MULTIDIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK

SOCIAL



Grassroots integration via Medical Aid

POLITICAL



Diplomacy
Diplomacy
Guest of Honour, 50th Independence

LEGAL



GEP Framework & Labor Rights

ETHICAL



Benign Partnership vs. Exploitation

INTERNATIONAL



Global South, Countering Influence

ECONOMIC



Trade in key sectors (Construction, Retail)

UPSC/APSC SYLLABUS LINKAGES

GS Paper 2	International Relations.
GS Paper 4	Indo-Pacific Geopolitics

NCERT TEXTBOOK LINKAGES

Class 12 Political Science (Security, Aid)
Class 12 Geography (Migration, Trade)

'Genocidal intent': The implications of a UN panel report for cases against Israel

Madhurita Goswami
New Delhi, June 26

IN A report released this week, a United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) commission of inquiry said that Israel has deliberately targeted Palestinian children in Gaza, documenting a pattern of acts to establish genocidal intent.

The commission called children "not just part of a population" but whose survival was "central to the existence and continuity" of the Palestinians. "The sheer number of cases investigated and documented by the commission showing a clear pattern that children were directly targeted by the Israeli security forces constitutes a key element in the Israeli authorities' genocidal intent to destroy the Palestinian group in Gaza," it said.

The commission

The report has been released by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel. The commission was established in May

2021 through a UNHRC resolution as an independent body to follow up on the conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory. It is mandated to submit annual reports.

The commission is currently chaired by S. Muradidhar of India, who retired in 2023 as the Chief Justice of the Odisha High Court. Other members are Florence Mumba of Zambia and Chris Sidoti of Australia.

Israel's actions

The commission cited instances to describe what it called "the intentional killing of Palestinian children through airstrikes in populated areas". As part of the inquiry, it interviewed medical practitioners who reported a consistent pattern of children with single gunshot wounds inflicted by quadcopters or snipers, and reviewed photos, videos, CT scans and X-rays provided by them.

The report highlighted that the October 2025 ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas did not stop the violence. There have been increasing killings of Palestinians, including children, near the "yellow line" — an Israel-declared



Mourners at the funeral of an Israeli airstrike victim in Gaza City. »

security buffer zone that cuts north-to-south through the Gaza Strip. The line, originally established as part of the US-mediated October 2025 Gaza peace plan, marks the specific boundary to which the Israeli military withdrew while maintaining control over a

significant portion of the Strip.

The report also discussed the torture of children during arrests and detention, including "rape, threats of rape, sexual assault, violence to the genitals, forcible stripping and humiliating acts". It also alleged that Israeli forces intentionally targeted schools and orphanages, forced the closure of paediatric hospitals, and destroyed infrastructure necessary for children's survival.

The commission urged Israel to halt operations in Gaza, return the bodies of killed children and adjudicate incidents involving children in special courts, among other things. Israel has called the report a "libellous sham" and "defamatory".

In September 2025, the commission, then chaired by Navi Pillay of South Africa and comprising Miloon Kothari of India and Chris Sidoti of Australia, had reached similar conclusions on genocidal intent.

Defining genocide

The UN Genocide Convention, under Article II, defines genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to de-

stroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

While a UN commission does not have the power to impose legal penalties, its findings can be used by international courts as documentary evidence. Noah Weisbord, associate professor of law at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, told *The Indian Express* that the report adds to the growing body of evidence of "genocidal intent" in cases against Israel.

For instance, in South Africa's genocide case against Israel before the International Court of Justice, the court has said that Palestinians in Gaza have plausible rights under the UN Genocide Convention that

require protection. Weisbord said this points to plausible violation, but the evidence required to prove genocide is held to a much higher standard.

"Ethnic cleansing, indiscriminate killing, or war crimes alone are not sufficient to establish it," he said. According to him, testimony from commission members, along with photographic and documentary evidence and individual witness statements, would play the deciding role.

Raushan Tara Jaiswal, assistant professor of law at O P Jindal Global University, said that it is hard to establish the mental element of genocidal intent. She told *The Indian Express* that unlike in the case of the Rohingya in Myanmar where an ethnicity was targeted, Palestinians do not squarely fit into such definitions of identity.

Weisbord said there was more hope for the one against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the International Criminal Court "as more details emerge about the chain of command behind acts of genocide, identifying specific battalions and government leaders' involvement".

- **Key Terms and Explanations**
- **Genocidal Intent (*Mens Rea*):** In international law, proving genocide requires establishing not just the physical acts of violence (*actus reus*), but the specific mental intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group. It is the highest and most difficult standard of proof in international criminal law because it demands evidence that the destruction of a group was the explicit objective, rather than a byproduct of intense urban warfare.
- **The UN Genocide Convention (1948):** Formally known as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, this treaty defines genocide under Article II. It lists five specific prohibited acts—including killing members of a group or preventing births—when committed with genocidal intent.
- **Commissions of Inquiry (UNHRC):** These are independent, ad-hoc investigative bodies established by the United Nations Human Rights Council. Comprising global legal experts, their mandate is to investigate grave violations of international humanitarian law, document evidence, and identify perpetrators. While they lack judicial enforcement or penal powers, their findings serve as foundational documentary evidence for international tribunals like the International Court of Justice (ICJ).
- **Plausible Violation:** A preliminary legal threshold used by international courts like the ICJ. It signifies that the evidence presented by an applicant state (e.g., South Africa) is sufficiently credible and grounded in law to suggest that rights protected under a treaty are actively at risk, warranting provisional emergency measures before a final judgment is rendered.
- **The "Yellow Line" and Asymmetric Buffer Zones:** Geopolitical and military demarcations established unilaterally by an occupying or dominant military power within a conflict zone. These zones often restrict civilian movement and serve as flashpoints where military operational rules override standard ceasefire agreements, frequently leading to escalated civilian casualties.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**
- The core discourse surrounding modern accountability frameworks focuses on how systematic patterns of warfare can be interpreted as legally binding evidence of intent. The conceptual breakdown of these arguments reveals the following structural components:
- **The Core Thesis**
- The central argument posits that the systematic, targeted destruction of a population's demographic future—specifically its children—cannot be dismissed as collateral damage. Instead, it constitutes a primary indicator of an intent to destroy the group's long-term existence and continuity.
- **Key Supporting Evidence**
- **Demographic Targeting:** Investigations by independent panels highlight that children are not merely incidental victims of urban bombardment. Documented evidence shows direct targeting, such as single gunshot wounds inflicted by advanced snipers or remote quadcopters in populated zones, indicating deliberate tactical choices.
- **Systemic Destruction of Survival Infrastructure:** The intentional targeting of schools, orphanages, and pediatric hospitals, alongside the denial of basic life-sustaining resources, is framed as a calculated effort to inflict conditions of life aimed at the group's physical destruction.
- **Failure of De-escalation Mechanisms:** Evidence indicates that even formal ceasefire agreements fail to curb violence, particularly around unilaterally declared security buffer zones, showcasing a persistent operational directive that overrides diplomatic pauses.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **The Post-WWII Genesis (1948):** Coined by Raphael Lemkin, the term "genocide" entered international law through the 1948 UN Genocide Convention. Created in the shadow of the Holocaust, the convention sought to ensure that state-sponsored annihilation of distinct groups would never again be protected by the shield of state sovereignty.
- **The Cold War Stagnation:** For decades, geopolitical rivalries paralyzed the enforcement of international humanitarian law. Massive human rights crises across the globe passed without formal genocide determinations as global superpowers used their veto powers to shield strategic allies.
- **The Post-Cold War Judicial Awakening (1990s):** The horrific events in Rwanda and Srebrenica (Bosnia) forced the international community to establish ad-hoc tribunals (the ICTR and ICTY). These tribunals set monumental legal precedents, clarifying that systemic sexual violence, regional massacres, and the targeted killing of military-aged males could legally constitute genocidal intent.
- **The Institutionalization of Accountability (2002):** The Rome Statute entered into force, establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a permanent forum to prosecute individuals for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, shifting the focus from state responsibility to individual criminal liability.
- **The Modern Era of Asymmetric and Urban Warfare:** Today, conflicts are rarely fought on conventional battlefields; instead, they take place within dense urban centers. This shift has forced international bodies to adapt their investigative methodologies, relying heavily on digital forensics, medical imagery, and expert panel testimonies to assess state accountability and individual command responsibility in real time.

- **Way Forward**

- **Elevating the Status of Fact-Finding Reports:** International judicial bodies like the ICJ and ICC should establish standardized, fast-tracked mechanisms to adopt and verify evidence compiled by independent UN commissions, reducing the time it takes to transition from an initial inquiry to formal judicial proceedings.
- **Reforming Global Governance and the Veto:** To counter institutional gridlock within the UN Security Council during severe humanitarian crises, a voluntary code of conduct should be championed. This code would require permanent members to suspend their veto power in cases involving verified documentation of mass atrocities and potential violations of the Genocide Convention.
- **Enforcing Strict Universality in Aid and Trade Agreements:** Global powers must uniformly condition bilateral military aid, technology transfers, and preferential trade agreements on a recipient state's strict adherence to the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law, removing political double standards.
- **Expanding the Scope of Universal Jurisdiction:** Domestic legal systems across democratic nations should strengthen their universal jurisdiction laws. This would allow national courts to investigate and prosecute foreign individuals accused of severe international crimes, ensuring that accountability does not depend solely on international tribunals.
- **Securing Demilitarized Protection Zones for Children:** The international community must move beyond temporary, fragile ceasefires toward establishing permanently monitored, independently verified demilitarized zones around vital civilian infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, and orphanages, backed by international enforcement mandates.

INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: NAVIGATING CONFLICT, LAW & GEOPOLITICS - Comprehensive Analysis for UPSC Aspirants.

1 Key Terms & Legal Nuances

Genocidal Intent (Mens Rea)



- Highest Standard of Proof
- Explicit Objective vs. byproduct

UN Genocide Convention (1948) Treaty

1. Killing Members of Group
2. Preventing Births
3. Forcibly Transferring Children
4. Imposing Conditions of Life to Destroy
5. Causing Serious Bodily/Mental Harm

Commissions of Inquiry (UNHRC)



- Global Legal Experts
- Foundational Documentary Evidence for IGJ

Plausible Violation



- Preliminary legal threshold
- Evidence Sufficiently Credible to suggest rights at risk

Yellow Line & Asymmetric Buffer Zones



- Checkpoints & restrictions, restrictions on civilian movement
- Flashpoints where military operational rules override casualties

2 Core Arguments & Conflict Dynamics

The Core Thesis

Systematic, Targeted Destruction of Demographic Future (Children)

Primary Indicator of Intent to Destroy Group's Long-Term Existence

Key Supporting Evidence



Counterarguments & Challenges



3 Historical Evolution & Multidimensional Analysis

Historical Evolution of Accountability

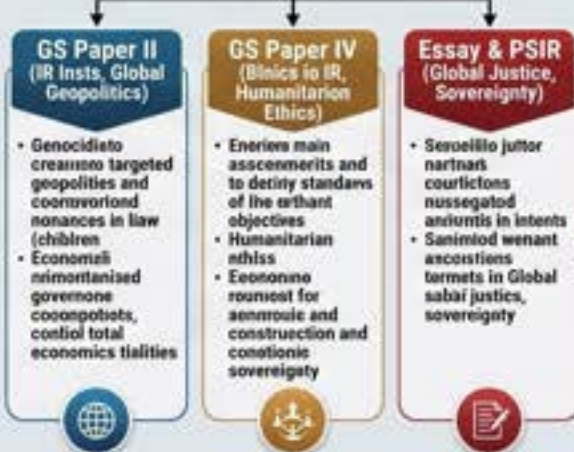


Multidimensional Analysis



4 UPSC Preparation & Future Focus

UPSC CSE SYLLABUS CORE LINKAGES



WAY FORWARD (INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS)

- ✓ Elevate Fact-Finding Reports
- ✓ Reform Global Governance & Voto
- ✓ Enforce Strict Universality in Aid
- ✓ Expand Universal Jurisdiction
- ✓ Secure Demilitarized Zones for Children

ALL PREVIOUS YEARS' UPSC QUESTIONS

- Prelims: 2023
- 2023 [Someh questions abbreviated for space, clearly?]
- 2022 What clones questions was alleviated for space?
- Mains GS Paper II/IV
- 2023 [Simple questions abbreviated for space, but clearly?]
- 2022 What are this government for space, not clearly?
- 2021 Mains question abbreviated for space?

Iran reasserts its right to control shipping in Strait of Hormuz after vessel hit

Reuters
DUBAI/LONDON

Tehran reasserted its right on Friday to control shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and warned Gulf states against siding with the U.S., a day after an attack on a ship near Oman highlighted the fragility of a preliminary deal to end the Iran war.

Iran was responding to what it called an "interventionist, irresponsible and provocative" joint statement by the U.S. and its Gulf states that rejected Iran's insistence that it could charge tolls on vessels transiting the strait.

"Safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz cannot be guaranteed under ambiguous arrangements, parallel routes or decision-making that does not take Iran's role as a coastal state into account," Deputy Foreign Minister Kaem Gharibabadi said on X.

Underlining the risks facing shipping, Iranian state TV later reported that three foreign tankers attempting what it called an "unauthorised passage" of the strait were turned back after a warning from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Rubio in the Gulf

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio - wrapping up a tour of the Gulf to reassure nervous regional allies about the interim pact - told presspersons on Thursday that if Iran threatened or blocked ships in the strait, "we're going to have a problem".

In their joint statement, Mr. Rubio and the GCC called for "free, uncondi-



Perturbed passage: Vessels at the Strait of Hormuz, as seen from Musandam, Oman, on Friday. (AP/Reuters)

tional, and unrestricted navigation" in the strait without tolls or "attempts to assert control", and said a lasting peace must address Iran's ballistic missiles, drones and support for proxy groups.

Iran's Foreign Ministry responded on Friday by saying the U.S. military presence in the Gulf was the source of regional insecurity and division, and that the strait should be governed by Iran and Oman in line with the terms of the interim deal.

"We warn against the continuation of hostile and interventionist policies in the region," it said.

Tehran took effective control of the waterway after U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28 triggered the war, disrupting oil flows and rattling global energy markets and the wider economy.

Ali Akbar Velayati, top adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader, issued a warning to Washington's Gulf allies.

"The stability of the Persian Gulf Arab states is indebted to Iran's century-long management of the Strait of Hormuz... their strategic survival is at the

mercy of Tehran's tolerance," Mr. Velayati said.

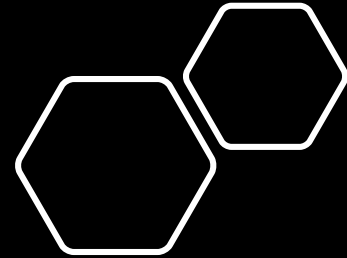
Taiwan's Evergreen Marine said earlier on Friday its Singapore-flagged ship Ever Lowly had been hit close to Oman on Thursday by an "unknown object" while on a route recommended by the British navy agency UKMT0.

No one hurt

Nobody was hurt in the incident and the ship later resumed its journey out of the strait. Two U.S. officials told Reuters that Iran had fired on the ship. Iran's Persian Gulf Strait Authority - established by Tehran to manage requests for ships to travel through the strait - said passage through unauthorised routes would be "the responsibility of the owner, operator, and vessel commander".

There was no immediate comment from the U.S. government.

U.S. President Donald Trump warned this month that if Iran did not honour the interim deal, including reopening the strait, the U.S. would probably go back to bombing the Islamic Republic.



- **Key Terms and Explanations**
 - **The Strait of Hormuz:** A vital, narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It serves as the world's most critical energy chokepoint. Geographically, it is bounded by Iran to the north and Oman (the Musandam exclave) to the south.
 - **Maritime Chokepoint:** A strategic, narrow route providing passage from one sea or ocean to another. Because traffic is densely concentrated in these areas, any closure or disruption has massive global economic repercussions. *Example:* If the Strait of Hormuz is blocked, nearly a fifth of the world's petroleum liquids are stranded, causing immediate spikes in global fuel prices.
 - **Transit Passage:** A concept under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that allows vessels (including warships) and aircraft the freedom of navigation or overflight solely for the purpose of continuous and expeditious transit through an international strait. Unlike "innocent passage," transit passage cannot be suspended unilaterally by coastal states.
 - **Persian Gulf Strait Authority:** A regulatory framework asserted by Tehran to manage requests, routes, and potentially levy tolls on vessels traveling through the Strait. This represents a shift from treating the strait as an open international waterway to an actively governed domestic or bilateral zone.
 - **United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO):** A Royal Navy capability that acts as a primary point of contact for merchant vessels operating in high-risk maritime zones, providing security information and coordinating responses to piracy or state-sponsored attacks.
 - **Littoral State:** A state that sits on the coast of a particular sea, gulf, or strait. In this context, Iran and Oman are the primary littoral states holding direct geographical custody over the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**
 - The core tension in this region revolves around a fundamental clash between national sovereignty and the concept of the global commons. The debate is split into two conflicting paradigms:
 - **The Assertion of Coastal Authority**
 - The argument put forward by Tehran hinges on the premise that safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz cannot be guaranteed under ambiguous international pacts that ignore its role as a primary coastal state. The claim asserts that long-term security in the Persian Gulf is inherently tied to historical, century-long management of the waters by regional actors. Consequently, there is an insistence on establishing regulatory frameworks like the Persian Gulf Strait Authority, turning back unauthorized vessels, and proposing transit tolls as compensation for providing maritime security.
 - **The Global Freedom of Navigation Principle**
 - Conversely, the counterargument championed by the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) emphasizes that the Strait must remain free, unconditional, and unrestricted for all international shipping. This viewpoint holds that unilateral attempts by a littoral state to assert administrative control, redirect shipping onto specific routes, or impose financial levies violate customary maritime law. They argue that regional stability is threatened by the deployment of ballistic missiles, drones, and proxy networks rather than by external naval policing.
 - **Fragility of the Diplomatic Status Quo**
 - The underlying friction exposes how vulnerable interim peace agreements can be. When tactical flashpoints occur—such as kinetic strikes or mysterious hits on commercial vessels like the Singapore-flagged *Ever Lovely*—the immediate reaction is a return to deterrence-based policies. This fragile balance is sustained by threats of severe military retaliation from external powers on one side, and warnings from regional states that the strategic survival of neighboring economies is dependent on their tolerance on the other.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**
- **The Era of Pax Britannica (Pre-1971):** For over a century, the British Empire maintained maritime hegemony over the Persian Gulf through treaties with local sheikhdoms (the Trucial States). This security umbrella ensured unhindered trade routes to British India. The withdrawal of British forces in 1971 created a security vacuum.
- **The Iranian "Gendarme" Phase (1974):** Under the Shah, Iran positioned itself as the primary guardian of the Gulf. In 1974, Iran and Oman signed a landmark agreement to jointly supervise the Strait of Hormuz, coordinate patrols, and maintain environmental and navigational control, setting a precedent for localized bilateral management.
- **The Tanker War (1980–1988):** During the brutal Iran-Iraq War, the conflict spilled directly into the sea. Both nations systematically targeted commercial merchant tankers belonging to each other and neutral nations to cripple oil exports. This phase forced the international community, led by the US military via *Operation Earnest Will*, to directly escort commercial shipping, solidifying external military intervention in the waterway.
- **The UNCLOS Divide (1982):** The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea introduced explicit rules for "Transit Passage" through international straits. Crucially, while Iran signed the convention, it never fully ratified it. Tehran maintains that it is only bound by transit passage rules for states that have ratified the treaty, reserving the right to apply stricter "innocent passage" rules to non-signatories like the United States.
- **Recent Flashpoints and Post-War Assertions:** Following periods of regional military strikes and subsequent fragile interim agreements, the theater has shifted from asymmetric sabotage to institutionalized containment. The creation of localized transit authorities and the threat of commercial taxation represent the latest phase in this long history of resource weaponization.

- **Way Forward**

- **Establishing an Inclusive Regional Maritime Security Framework**

- The current security model depends heavily on external naval intervention, which often worsens regional rivalries. A sustainable long-term solution requires building an institutionalized maritime dialogue that includes all littoral states of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. Drawing inspiration from successfully managed waterways like the Malacca Strait (via the Eyes-in-the-Sky initiative), a joint patrol mechanism could shift the responsibility of maintaining security back to regional actors, reducing friction with external powers.

- **Clarifying Technical Ambiguities in Interim Agreements**

- To prevent minor incidents from escalating into broader conflicts, future interim peace pacts must clearly define maritime parameters. Vague arrangements regarding passage rights often lead to conflicting interpretations. Establishing a dedicated, neutral technical commission under international supervision could help clearly define allowed shipping lanes, standardize communication protocols with local authorities, and rule out unilateral toll collection on international transit.

- **De-escalation through Neutral International Arbitration**

- Disputes regarding the interpretation of UNCLOS and transit versus innocent passage should be channeled into structured international legal forums, such as the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), rather than being contested via military standoffs. State actors should be encouraged to present their legal arguments regarding territorial waters through arbitration, preventing commercial shipping from being used as political leverage.

GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS: THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ



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GEOPOLITICAL CHOKEPOINT: THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ



CONFIDENCE CLAIMS: SOVEREIGNTY VS. GLOBAL COMMONS



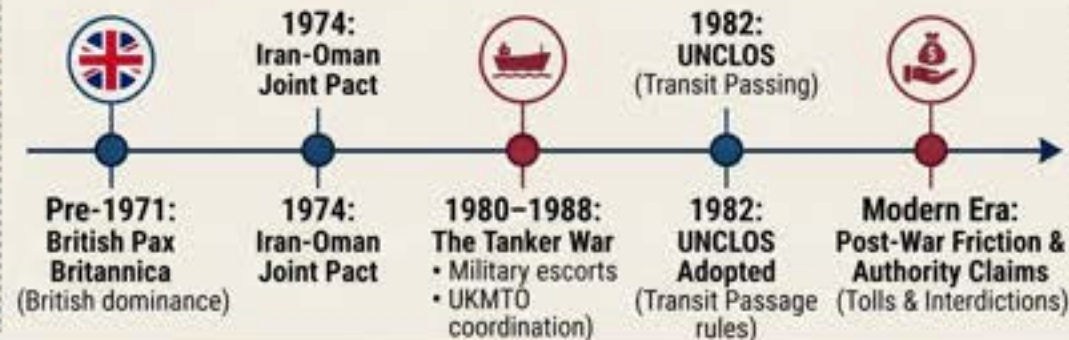
MULTIDIMENSIONAL IMPACT ANALYSIS



UPSC CSE SYLLABUS LINKAGES



HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF FRICTION



WAY FORWARD: SOLUTIONS & INDIA'S STRATEGY



RISE ABOVE THE REST

India's eastern borders affected by flow of opium from Myanmar: NCB

Neighbouring country emerges as alternative global opium source after ban on drugs in Afghanistan, says bureau: India's eastern borders through Manipur corridor are the most direct and porous entry point for this expanding production base

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Following the 2022 Taliban-imposed ban on drugs in Afghanistan, Myanmar has emerged as an alternative source of global opium supply and the consequences are already visible along India's eastern borders, through the Manipur corridor, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) said in its 2026 annual report.

The report, released on Friday by Home Minister Amit Shah, highlighted the fact that the northeastern States of Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland are bearing the sharpest frontline exposure due to the enhanced production of drugs in Myanmar.

Porous border

Porous border mechanisms, including the Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the India-Myanmar border, have created conditions under which these States have transitioned from peripheral transit zones to active staging grounds for distribution of narcotics into the Indian hinterland.



Illegal trade: Myanmar's illicit opium cultivation expanded by approximately 56% between 2021 and 2023. AP

Myanmar's illicit opium cultivation expanded by approximately 56% between 2021 and 2023, according to the NCB report, with the area under poppy cultivation reaching 45,200 hectares.

India's eastern borders through the Manipur corridor are the most direct and porous entry point for this expanding production base, the report said.

"Myanmar's Golden Triangle has expanded as both an opiate supplier and a dominant methamphetamine (Yaba tablets) hub. The convergence, primarily in areas controlled by ethnic armed groups in Shan State, has created a poly-drug production. The Manipur corridor, through

which India's National Highway no. 102 passes, is the primary land entry point for both heroin and methamphetamine tablets," it said.

The second major trafficking corridor enters India through Champhai in Mizoram, which shares close proximity with Myanmar's Chin State.

Drugs are smuggled through unfenced and porous stretches of the border and routed towards Silchar in Assam's Barak Valley through Alzawl and adjoining road networks, the report added.

In 2025, Mizoram accounted for 1,477 kg of seized amphetamine-type stimulants, out of total seizures amounting to 3,485

kg across the country. The other States where such recoveries were reported are Manipur (535 kg), Delhi (454 kg), Gujarat (308 kg) and Karnataka (164 kg).

Drone-based trafficking

On the other side of the country, despite the Taliban's 2022 crackdown, which reduced Afghan opium production by 93% from its peak, around 13,200 tonnes of pre-ban narcotics are sustaining the trafficking pipelines and making their way into India through the western border.

The NCB said that drone-based drug trafficking from across the Pakistan border has seen a five-fold increase over the past five years, particularly into Punjab.

In 2025, there were 305 such cases, resulting in the seizure of 468 kg of narcotics, a 96% increase in quantity over 2024. Punjab alone accounted for 298 such cases and 461 kg seized, primarily heroin (449,751 kg) and methamphetamine (9,018 kg). Overall, Punjab accounted for 58% of total seizures, which amounted to 3,567

kg across the country.

"The scale of this threat is underscored by the growth trajectory: from just 3 incidents in 2021, incidents surged to 35 in 2022, 28 in 2023, before accelerating sharply to 178 incidents in 2024 and 305 incidents in 2025, a 100-fold increase in incident count over five years," the report said.

This exponential rise reflects the growing operational maturity of trafficking networks using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to circumvent traditional border controls, the NCB said. Additional incidents were reported in Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir.

"The South Asian arm [of the drug trade via Afghanistan] flows through Pakistan into India via both the land frontier in Punjab and Rajasthan, and the maritime frontier along the Gujarat and Maharashtra coastlines, the latter a route of increasing concern given its use of fishing vessels and coastal craft that operate below the detection threshold of standard maritime surveillance," the NCB said.

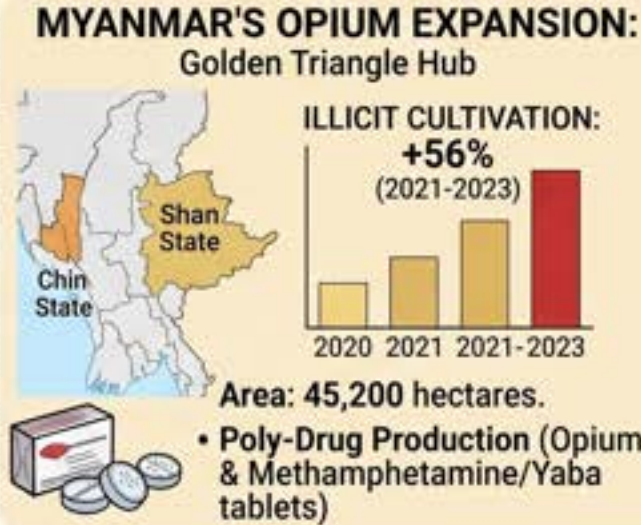
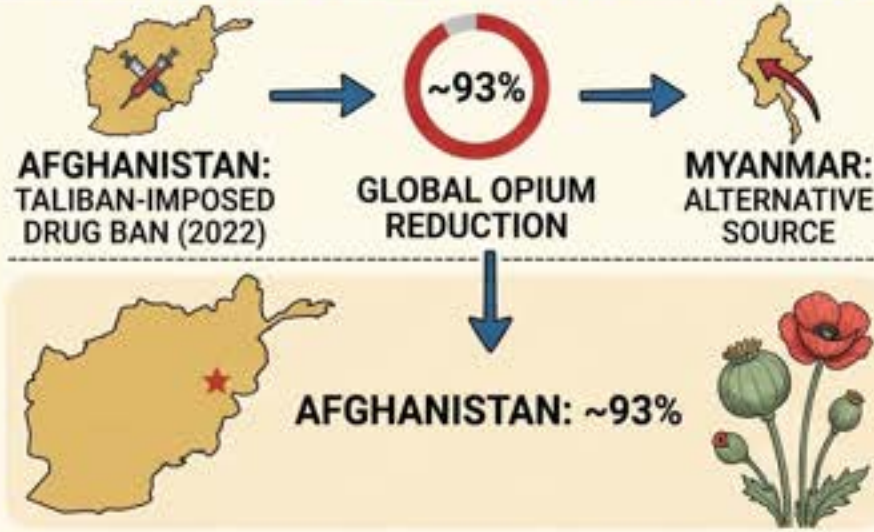
- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **The Golden Triangle:** This refers to the sovereign border region where Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand meet. It stands as one of the world's most prolific hubs for illicit opium cultivation and synthetic drug manufacturing. *Example:* Ethnic armed organizations operating within Myanmar's Shan State utilize this zone to mass-produce cheap methamphetamines (Yaba tablets) and high-grade heroin, targeting markets across South and Southeast Asia.
- **The Golden Crescent:** This represents the principal global illicit opium-producing corridor spanning across Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. *Example:* Despite localized crackdowns or bans on cultivation in Afghanistan, deep-seated trafficking networks use legacy stockpiles to push narcotics eastward into India via the western land and maritime borders.
- **Free Movement Regime (FMR):** A unique, historical bilateral border arrangement between India and Myanmar. It historically permitted tribes living within 16 kilometers of either side of the border to cross without passports or visas. While designed to protect socio-cultural ties, its open nature inadvertently created highly porous corridors used by traffickers to transition from peripheral smuggling into deep-hinterland distribution.
- **Porous and Unfenced Borders:** Border stretches characterized by rugged terrain, dense forests, or riverine networks where physical fencing is either absent or heavily compromised. This infrastructure gap allows illicit networks to establish active staging grounds for moving contraband.
- **Drone-Based Trafficking (UAV Proliferation):** The deployment of low-cost, commercial off-the-shelf Unmanned Aerial Vehicles by transnational syndicates to fly contraband across international borders. *Example:* Traffickers along the western border in Punjab use GPS-guided drones to drop heavy payloads of heroin and methamphetamines at pre-designated rural coordinates, effectively circumventing traditional ground-level fences and thermal imaging systems.
- **Poly-Drug Production:** An operational model where drug cartels diversify their manufacturing base to produce both natural plant-based narcotics (like opium and heroin) and synthetic chemical stimulants (like methamphetamines) simultaneously. This maximizes profit margins and exploits multiple consumer demographics.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**
 - The core thesis posits that whenever a major disruption occurs in one global drug hub, it triggers a "waterbed effect," forcing illicit production to scale up rapidly in alternative porous zones, ultimately exposing India's eastern and western frontiers to a sophisticated, multi-modal security threat.
- **[The Transnational Shift and the Rise of Myanmar]**
 - A major argument centers on how the 2022 Taliban-imposed ban on drugs in Afghanistan structurally altered global supply chains. As Afghan opium production plummeted by approximately 93% from its historical peak, Myanmar rapidly emerged as the primary alternative global source. Between 2021 and 2023, Myanmar's illicit opium cultivation expanded by roughly 56%, with the total area under poppy cultivation soaring to 45,200 hectares. This massive agricultural expansion is heavily concentrated in volatile regions like Shan State and Chin State, which are largely controlled by ethnic armed groups.
- **Vulnerabilities of the Eastern Frontier**
 - The eastern border through the Manipur corridor serves as the most direct and porous entry point for this expanding production base. Security data from [image_52ec39.jpg](#) demonstrates a structural shift: northeastern states like Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland have transitioned from peripheral transit zones into active staging grounds for domestic drug distribution.
 - **The Manipur Corridor:** Centered around National Highway No. 102, this serves as the primary overland vector for high-purity heroin and methamphetamine tablets.
 - **The Mizoram-Chin State Vector:** Entering through Champhai, which shares a direct boundary with Myanmar's unstable Chin State, this route funneled massive quantities of contraband. In 2025 alone, Mizoram accounted for 1,477 kg of seized amphetamine-type stimulants.
 - **The Assam Consolidation:** The illicit flow travels through unfenced stretches of the international border, routing directly toward Silchar in Assam's Barak Valley via Aizawl and adjoining road networks, before penetrating deep into the Indian heartland.
- **The Western Front and Technological Exploitation**
 - Conversely, the western front presents a completely different, highly sophisticated operational challenge. Even with the raw reduction in fresh Afghan cultivation, a massive legacy stockpile of approximately 13,200 tonnes of pre-ban narcotics continues to feed trafficking pipelines running through Pakistan.
 - The primary argument here highlights the exponential rise of drone-based trafficking to bypass traditional physical barriers. In Punjab, drone-related smuggling incidents witnessed a staggering 100-fold increase over a five-year trajectory—escalating from just 3 incidents in 2021 to 305 incidents in 2025. This sharp acceleration allowed traffickers to drop 468 kg of narcotics across the western border in 2025 alone, representing a 96% volume increase over the previous year. Punjab alone bore the brunt of this technology-driven onslaught, accounting for 58% of total nationwide amphetamine-type stimulant and heroin seizures.
- **Maritime Infiltration Tactics**
 - Beyond land frontiers, the South Asian arm of this illicit trade utilizes maritime routes along the western coastline. Syndicates deploy ordinary fishing vessels and minor coastal crafts to transport narcotics through the maritime frontiers of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Because these small boats operate below the detection thresholds of standard maritime radar surveillance, they present a persistent and difficult challenge for coastal defense agencies.



GLOBAL NARCO-DYNAMICS: INDIA'S BORDERS & INTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES



EASTERN POROUS BORDERS: Transitions from Peripheral to Staging Grounds

CORRIDOR 1:

MANIPUR CORRIDOR (Major Entry)

Mark NH-102
Heroin & Meth flow; direct entry point.



EASTERN BORDER CHALLENGES

(Porous, FMR, Terrain, Ethnic armed groups)



(Porous, FMR, Terrain, Ethnic armed groups)

WESTERN BORDER CHALLENGES (Drone-Based & Maritime)



DRONE TRAFFICKING:
100-fold increase over 5 years (Punjab & Rajasthan)



Pre-ban narcotics:
13,200 tonnes



Maritime:
Below detection thresholds (Gujarat & Maharashtra coasts)

KEY IMPLICATIONS

- Narco-trafficking networks mature with UAVs.
- Regional instability fuels flow and simutity fuels flow.
- Hinterland distribution.

INTEGRATED DEFENSE NEEDED

(Technology, Intel, Community)

POROUS BORDERS (FMR & Unfenced)



FMR:
Conditions for porous entry.

Amphetanmine-Type StimulanTS iarom entry per analysis)



FMR:
Conditions for porous entry.

Amendments to anti-drug law will address emerging challenges, says Amit Shah

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday that the Department of Revenue would amend the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and asked States to submit suggestions to address existing loopholes.

The NDPS Act and Rules will be updated to address emerging challenges and regulatory gaps while promoting a more reformative approach towards persons consuming drugs or suffering from addiction, according to the 'Vision Document on Drug Control (2026-2029)' released by Mr. Shah. He said that the entire road map had been prepared on the foundation of "detect, disrupt and destroy", and urged the State governments to target drug traffickers and gangsters hiding abroad, through Red Corner Notices with the help of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

He addressed the 10th apex-level meeting of the Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) organised by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).



Home Minister Amit Shah releases the vision document on narcotics control during the 10th apex-level meeting of the NCB. PTI

He said that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) was working towards establishing exclusive NDPS courts to ensure speedy convictions in major cases. The entire process of identifying proceeds of crime, freezing them, seizing them, and ensuring they do not return to the accused will have to be made evidence-based and equipped with modern technology, the Minister said.

Releasing the vision document, he said that the next three years will decide "whether addiction will defeat us or we will defeat addiction".

The document provides a time-bound national strategy to substantially dismantle the narcotics-drug

ecosystem through coordinated action against trafficking, abuse, illicit finance and organised criminal networks.

More than 40 Ministries, Central agencies, State governments, district administrations, educational institutions, civil society organisations and citizens will work together under a common national framework against drugs. Enforcement efforts will shift from targeting individual carriers to identifying, investigating and dismantling complete drug trafficking networks, the document stated.

It also called for AI-enabled profiling to strengthen interdiction capabilities across land, sea and air trafficking routes.

- **Key Terms and Explanations**
 - **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985:** This is India's flagship statutory framework designed to fulfill international treaty obligations. It strictly prohibits the cultivation, production, possession, sale, purchase, and consumption of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances except for medical or scientific use.
 - **Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD):** Set up as a multi-tier institutional mechanism, NCORD acts as a central node to bring together various enforcement, intelligence, and administrative agencies. It functions at national, state, and district levels to eliminate bureaucratic silos.
 - **Proceeds of Crime:** This refers to any property, asset, or financial gain derived directly or indirectly from criminal activities like drug trafficking. Disruption of these funds is essential because financial profit is the ultimate driver of organized crime syndicates.
 - **Interpol Red Corner Notice (RCN):** An international request issued by Interpol to law enforcement agencies worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a fugitive pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) acts as the National Central Bureau for Interpol in India.
 - **AI-Enabled Interdiction:** The integration of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and predictive data analytics into border and transit security to identify, track, and intercept contraband movements.
-
- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**
 - The contemporary philosophy of drug control in India is undergoing a monumental paradigm shift. The core thesis focuses on a dual-track strategy: executing relentless, technology-driven elimination of trafficking networks while embracing a deeply empathetic, health-centric approach toward drug users and addicts.
 - **The "Detect, Disrupt and Destroy" Pillars**
 - The structural backbone of the modern strategy relies on an aggressive, triple-action operational framework:
 - **Detect:** Leveraging advanced technology, cyber intelligence, and inter-agency data sharing to identify hidden illicit networks, darknet marketplaces, and crypto-currency channels used for funding.
 - **Disrupt:** Moving beyond localized, isolated seizures of contraband to target the financial backbone of syndicates. This involves tracing the money trail, identifying the proceeds of crime, and freezing assets to render the illegal enterprise financially unviable.
 - **Destroy:** Completely dismantling the physical, digital, and international infrastructure of organized gangs, ensuring they cannot reconstitute their operations even if individual operatives are arrested.
 - **Paradigm Shift from Retail Carriers to Wholesaling Networks**
 - Historically, enforcement agencies often exhausted substantial resources prosecuting low-level "mules" or individual carriers. The current strategy shifts the focus entirely toward the top of the pyramid:
 - Instead of celebrating minor street-level seizures, investigators are tasked with working backward to map out entire supply chains, from production sources to major financial beneficiaries.
 - It acknowledges that individual carriers are easily replaceable cogs in a wheel; the real victory lies in neutralizing the transnational kingpins and overseas gangsters who orchestrate these networks.
 - **The Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society Framework**
 - A defining characteristic of this strategy is the acknowledgment that narcotics control cannot be handled in isolation by police forces alone. It implements a multi-sectoral national framework:
 - **Inter-Ministerial Convergence:** Over 40 ministries, central agencies, and state governments are brought onto a single platform to synchronize their efforts, combining health, education, finance, and enforcement.
 - **Grassroots Mobilization:** The strategy extends from national apex bodies down to district administrations, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and individual citizens. This creates a collective societal defense mechanism against substance abuse.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **The Pre-1985 Era:** For decades, India relied on older colonial-era laws like the Opium Acts and the Dangerous Drugs Act, 1930. The primary focus was on regulating trade and collecting state excise revenue rather than executing an absolute, punitive criminal ban. At the same time, traditional use of certain cannabis derivatives was socially tolerated in several regions. However, the adoption of the Indian Constitution introduced Article 47, placing a moral and governance obligation on the State to improve public health by prohibiting consumption of intoxicating drinks and health-injurious drugs.
- **The Turning Point of 1985:** Driven by growing global pressure and obligations under international treaties like the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), India enacted the NDPS Act in 1985. This shifted the legal landscape from regulatory control to strict criminalization. The initial avatar of the law was heavily retributive, featuring mandatory minimum sentences and highly restrictive bail provisions that treated consumers and hardened traffickers with similar severity.
- **The Graded Amendments (2001 & 2014):** Recognizing that the lack of distinction between an addict and a distributor was clogging jails and failing to stop large-scale syndicates, the law was amended to introduce a rationalized, quantity-based sentencing structure. Punishments were categorized into small, intermediate, and commercial quantities. The 2014 amendment went a step further by easing access to essential narcotic drugs for medical care (like palliative pain management) while strengthening provisions for asset forfeiture.
- **The Present Digital Frontier (Vision 2026–2029):** Today, the threat has mutated with the rise of the dark web, synthetic drugs, drone drops across borders, and cryptocurrency funding channels. The current phase addresses these evolving challenges by incorporating advanced tools like artificial intelligence, establishing exclusive NDPS courts for rapid judicial resolution, and employing international extradition channels to proactively counter narco-terrorism.

- **Way Forward**

- **Institutionalize Digital and Crypto-Forensics:** As drug networks increasingly migrate to darknet marketplaces and utilize cryptocurrency for transactions, law enforcement personnel should receive ongoing training in advanced cyber-forensics, blockchain analysis, and open-source intelligence (OSINT).
 - **Build Scale and Infrastructure for Exclusive Courts:** Establishing exclusive NDPS courts is a positive step, but they must be supported by adequate digital infrastructure, dedicated forensic science labs, and fast-track procedures to ensure speedier trials without compromising due process.
 - **Strengthen Community-Led Health Networks:** The demand side of the drug trade can be reduced by integrating de-addiction and mental health counseling into the primary healthcare ecosystem. Expanding initiatives like the *Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan* through schools, colleges, and local self-governments can help create resilient communities.
 - **Enhance Indian Ocean Maritime Interdiction:** With land borders subject to intense monitoring, international drug syndicates frequently look to maritime transit routes across the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. India should expand its AI-enabled maritime profiling, improve coastal radar integration, and conduct joint naval patrols with regional partners in the Indian Ocean Rim.
-



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INDIA'S REFINED COUNTER-NARCOTICS STRATEGY: A VISION FOR 2026-2029

THE DUAL-TRACK PHILOSOPHY: COMPASSION & DETERRENCE

UPSC CSE LINKAGES



ARMORED NETWORKS



CHATTELERS



RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE
(TRAFFICKERS)

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
(CONSUMERS)



COUNSELING



HUMAN CAPITAL

UPSC CSE LINKAGES

SUPPLY REDUCTION

VS.

DEMAND REDUCTION

THE CORE STRATEGY: 'DETECT, DISRUPT & DESTROY' PILLARS

DETECT



AI Radar scanning shipping and digital data



DIGITAL DATA



DARKNET

DISRUPT

Money trails being traced



Assets Frozen

DESTROY



Dismantling global kingpin networks



International collaboration

UPSC CSE LINKAGES

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION



NCORD



AI-ENABLED INTERDICTION



INTERPOL RCN



PROCEEDS OF CRIME

MULTIDIMENSIONAL IMPACT

UPSC CSE LINKAGES



SOCIAL

Human Capital, De-stigmatization



POLITICAL

Cooperative Federalism



SECURITY

Golden Crescent/ Triangle mapping, narco-terrorism



ECONOMIC

Shadow economy, money laundering



ETHICAL

State Paternalism vs Autonomy

WAY FORWARD

NCERT CONNECTIONS



DIGITAL & CRYPTO-FORENSICS



EXCLUSIVE NDPS COURTS



COMMUNITY-LED HEALTH



MARITIME INTERDICTION

NFSA amendments: 7 kg of foodgrains for a person, and maximum 35 kg for a household

EXPLAINER

A.M. Jigeesh

NEW DELHI

The story so far: The Union Food and Public Distribution Department on Wednesday published a draft of the proposed amendments to the National Food Security Act (NFSA). The draft is uploaded on the department's website. The public can comment on the amendments till July 13.

The amendment

A new provision in Section

charges. Earlier, it was 35 kg per AAY household, irrespective of the number of members in the household.

Reason

The reason the Union government has given in the notice, along with the draft amendment, is that the existing household-based entitlement under the AAY, though intended as a protective measure for the most vulnerable families, results in significant inequities depending upon the size of the household.

"Smaller households receive a higher per-capita



Activists have demanded allocation of 14 kg per person.

provide for more rational foodgrain allocation and better align entitlements with nutritional requirements."

Criticism

allocation of 35 kg per AAY household must continue. The removal of this would result in decreased allocation to States such as Kerala, he added.

Anuradha Talwar, an office-bearer of the Right to Food Campaign, said the amendment would bring a "North-South divide" in foodgrain allocation. She said families in the South had fewer people than those in North India and smaller families would get less allocations. "Also the number of AAY families has not been revised as the Census was delayed. A large section of the popula-

manding allocation of 14 kg per person. They argue that if the government wants to base the allocation on the recommendations of the Indian Council of Medical Research, then pulses and edible oil must also be provided. "The poorest of the poor doesn't have market access to buy essentials at the market rate. So the government must provide pulses or cooking oil for them," Ms. Talwar added.

The next step

After considering the comments from the public, the government is likely to

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** A landmark legislative framework that shifted the paradigm of food security from a welfare-based approach to a legal, rights-based entitlement. It legally covers up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population, providing highly subsidized foodgrains under the Targeted Public Distribution System.
 - **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY):** Launched in December 2000, this scheme identifies the "poorest of the poor" among the Below Poverty Line (BPL) population. Historically, AAY households were entitled to a fixed, flat quota of foodgrains per month, regardless of the number of family members, to ensure a baseline survival net for the most destitute.
 - **Priority Households (PHH):** The second major category under the NFSA. Unlike AAY, which has historically operated on a uniform household allocation, PHH entitlements are strictly individual-centric, providing a specific quantum of foodgrains per person per month.
 - **Intra-Category Inequity:** A structural anomaly where beneficiaries within the same vulnerability classification receive unequal benefits due to institutional design. For instance, under a flat household-rationing system, a two-member family receives a much higher per-capita grain allocation than a seven-member family, despite both belonging to the identical ultra-poor tier.
 - **Per-Capita Calibration:** An administrative shift from treating the "household" as the fundamental unit of welfare distribution to treating the "individual" as the baseline unit. This aligns resource distribution directly with human biological needs rather than variable family sizes.
 - **Hidden Hunger and Nutritional Security:** While food security often focuses on caloric sufficiency (satiating hunger with cereals like rice and wheat), nutritional security demands access to a balanced diet rich in micronutrients and proteins. The absence of these essential nutrients, even when stomach-filling carbohydrates are available, leads to "hidden hunger."
-

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**

- The debate surrounding the structural modification of foodgrain delivery highlights a critical tension between administrative rationalization and grassroots welfare preservation.

- **The Core Thesis**

- The central argument for reforming food entitlements rests on the need to eliminate horizontal inequities within the poorest beneficiary cohorts. By transitioning the extreme-poverty food net from a rigid household cap to a dynamic per-capita metric, the administration aims to optimize distribution efficiency, ensuring that larger, vulnerable families are not penalized by a dwindling per-capita share.

- **Supporting Arguments for Rationalization**

- **Rectifying the Household-Size Paradox:** Under a flat allocation system, small households receive an unintended windfall of grains per person, whereas large families face systemic shortfalls that drop their per-capita support below even standard priority household allocations. Individual targeting creates a level playing field.

- **Alignment with Biological Reality:** Human nutritional requirements are inherently individual. Calibrating food grain delivery to the individual level ensures that state resource allocation directly matches the aggregate consumption requirements of the living citizens within a household.

- **Counterarguments and Criticisms**

- **The Demographic and Regional Asymmetry:** Opponents highlight a distinct demographic friction, often termed a regional divide. States in Southern India, having successfully accelerated their demographic transition, feature significantly smaller average family sizes than states in Northern India. Consequently, a shift to individual-centric caps risks reducing the absolute volume of food assistance flowing to welfare-dependent households in demographically advanced regions.

- **The Census Data Deficit:** A glaring operational vulnerability is the prolonged delay in conducting the national Census. Because the legal ceilings and identification metrics remain anchored to outdated population baselines, transitioning to a strict per-capita model without updated population data threatens to worsen exclusion errors, leaving millions of newly formed or expanded families outside the safety net.

- **The Omission of Macro-Nutrients:** Activists argue that if policy updates invoke scientific nutritional guidelines, such as those by medical research councils, they must look beyond carbohydrates. Restricting the safety net to cereals while ignoring essential proteins and fats—like pulses and cooking oils—fails to address the market vulnerabilities of the ultra-poor who cannot afford market-rate essentials.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **Pre-Independence Foundations:** The genesis of formal food rationing in India traces back to the Second World War and the catastrophic Bengal Famine of 1943. The British administration introduced urban food rationing schemes to counter severe supply disruptions and price inflation.
- **The Era of Universal PDS (1950s–1990s):** Following independence, India faced chronic food shortages, relying heavily on foreign aid like the US PL-480 program. The establishment of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in 1965, alongside the successes of the Green Revolution, allowed the Public Distribution System (PDS) to evolve into a universal entitlement program aimed at stabilizing market prices and ensuring basic food availability across all income segments.
- **The Shift to Targeting (1997):** Confronted with mounting fiscal burdens and leakages, the government dismantled the universal framework in 1997, introducing the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). This policy bifurcated the population into Above Poverty Line (APL) and Below Poverty Line (BPL) categories, introducing differential pricing and quotas.
- **Inception of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (2000):** Recognizing that the broad BPL category failed to adequately protect the most vulnerable, the state launched the AAY in 2000. It carved out the highly destitute layer, guaranteeing them a secure, flat grain allotment per household to insulate them from extreme starvation.
- **The Rights-Based Era (2013–Present):** The passage of the NFSA in 2013 legally institutionalized food access, replacing discretionary welfare with justiciable rights. In recent years, policy focus has pivoted toward technological consolidation (Aadhaar seeding, biometric verification, and portability via One Nation One Ration Card) and structural adjustments aimed at correcting systemic distribution anomalies.

- **Way Forward**

- **Nutritional Diversification**

- Public policy should shift focus from basic caloric security to comprehensive nutritional security. To effectively address hidden hunger among the most vulnerable populations, the distribution basket should expand beyond wheat and rice to include subsidized pulses, millets, and edible oils, aligning with modern nutritional recommendations.

- **Dynamic Data Architecture and Regional Calibration**

- To minimize inclusion and exclusion errors, the implementation of per-capita models should be supported by updated demographic data. Integrating real-time registries like the e-Shram portal can help create a more dynamic, responsive safety net that reflects current family structures and migration patterns, rather than relying on outdated census baselines.

- **Asymmetric and Flexible Federal Frameworks**

- Welfare policies benefit from operational flexibility that accounts for regional differences. The central government can establish baseline standards while allowing state administrations the flexibility to adjust delivery models based on local demographic realities. For example, states with smaller average family sizes could receive options to customize allocations, ensuring local vulnerable groups are not disadvantaged.



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COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS: REFORMING THE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT (NFSA)

A 360° Educational Resource for UPSC & APSC aspirants



KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS



NFSA 2013
Legal Rights



AAY
Antyodaya Anna Yojana: Poorest of the Poor



PHH
Priority Households: Per-Person quota

INTRA-CATEGORY INEQUITY



PER-CAPITA CALIBRATION

Household → Individual

LOGICAL & PHILOSOPHICAL BASE

EGALITARIAN JUSTICE

Equal individual entitlements

VS

UTILITARIAN UTILITY

Maximizing systemic good

"John Rawls' 'Justice as Fairness' concept woven by Manmanoj coveptent"

MAIN ARGUMENTS: PROS & CONS

Arguments FOR RATIONALIZATION

- E.g. Individual target or mniting
- E.g. Fairness targeting
- Nutritional alignment, and nutritionas



Arguments CRITICISMS & CONCERNS

- E.g. Regional demographic divide
- E.g. Census data delay
- E.g. Omission of proteins, and mission of proteins



PRELIMS CORNER: SAMPLE PYQs

- AAY Eligibility Criteria
- NFSA Household Def.
- AAY Eligibility Criteria
- NFSA Household Def.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION (TIMELINE)



UPSC CSE SYLLABUS & NCERT LINKAGES

NCERTs		UPSC GS Papers		
		GS 2	GS 3	GS 4
Class 9 Econ	Food Security	 Governance, Social Justice	 PDS, Food Security	 Ethics
Class 11 Econ	Poverty			
Class 12 Pol Sci	Development			

WAY FORWARD & RECOMMENDATIONS

- NUTRITIONAL DIVERSIFICATION** (grains, pulses, millets)
- DYNAMIC DATA ARCHITECTURE** (e-Shram, real-time registries)
- FLEXIBLE FEDERAL FRAMEWORK** (state customization)
- SUPPLY CHAIN REFORM** (digitization, logistics)

Govt. to simplify drug import rules for test, examination, analysis

Ministry already amended New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019 in Jan. 2026 introducing similar notification system for local test licences

Hindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Union Health Ministry has proposed amendments to the Drugs Rules, 1945 to simplify the procedure for securing permission for import of drugs for examination, test or analysis. The change introduces an acknowledgement-based system for import of all drugs in small quantities for analytical and non-clinical testing purposes.

Under the revised provisions, applicants intending to import such drugs will be required to submit a prior intimation form and may import the drug based on the acknowledgement generated upon submission of such intimation.

The procedure is applicable for import of drugs for analytical and non-clinical testing, except for certain drugs belonging to the categories of sex hormones, cytotoxic drugs, beta lactam drugs, biologics containing live microorganisms and narcotic and psychotropic substances, said a release issued by the Health Ministry.

The Ministry has already carried out amendments to the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019 in January introducing a similar notification system for domestic test licences. The present proposed amendment expands it to imports also.



Right prescriptions: The amendment is expected to significantly cut compliance burden on applicants. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The amendment is expected to significantly cut compliance burden on applicants by eliminating licensing needs for importing small lots of drugs for testing or R&D purposes.

Deregulation role

"This will play a substantial role in deregulating the R&D sector in pharmaceuticals and enable start-ups and industries to quickly initiate testing or analysis. The online intimation system will offer a seamless and instant gateway for the stakeholders," said a senior health official. The draft has been placed in the public domain for stakeholder consultation.

Meanwhile, the Ministry also published a draft notification proposing amendments to Rule 31 of the Drugs Rules, 1945 with the goal of rationalising the residual shelf life norms for imported drugs and promoting ease of doing business in the pharma sector.

The draft amendment proposes to revise the norm of a minimum residual shelf life of more than 60% for imported drugs to a minimum residual shelf life of 12 months at the time of import. However, in view of specialised nature and public health considerations, the existing norm of a minimum residual shelf life of more than 60% shall continue to apply to biological products and radio pharmaceuticals.

The proposed amendment seeks to aid more efficiency in the pharmaceutical supply chain while maintaining availability of quality medicines for patients. By ensuring imported drugs have a minimum remaining shelf life of 12 months upon entry into the country, the proposal provides sufficient time for distribution and consumption before expiry, thereby ensuring patients continue to receive medicines with adequate usable shelf life.

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Drugs Rules, 1945:** This is a comprehensive framework of subordinate legislation derived from the parent *Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940*. It dictates the precise conditions for the import, manufacture, distribution, and sale of drugs and cosmetics in India. Any modification here directly alters the daily operational realities of pharmaceutical companies, clinical research organizations, and academic laboratories.
 - **Acknowledgement-Based / Prior Intimation System:** A governance model that shifts from a "pre-facto approval" regime to a "post-facto compliance" model. Under this system, an importer does not wait weeks for a regulator to review and issue a license; instead, they submit a detailed intimation form online. The portal instantly generates an automated acknowledgement, which serves as the legal permission to clear customs.
 - **Residual Shelf Life:** This refers to the remaining time a pharmaceutical product retains its full therapeutic potency, stability, and safety before its official expiration date, measured from the moment it enters the destination country. Traditionally, India required imported drugs to have more than 60% of their total shelf life remaining.
 - **Non-Clinical Testing / Analytical Testing:** Preliminary laboratory investigations conducted *in vitro* (test tubes, cell cultures) or *in vivo* (animal models) to evaluate the toxicity, chemical composition, and pharmacological safety of a substance before it is ever tested on humans.
 - **Biological Products and Radiopharmaceuticals:** High-complexity medical substances derived from living organisms (such as vaccines, monoclonal antibodies, and gene therapies) or drugs containing radioactive isotopes used for diagnosing or treating diseases like cancer. Due to their molecular instability and high risk of degradation, they require ultra-strict, specialized handling conditions.
-

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**
 - The ongoing reforms in India's pharmaceutical sector reflect a deliberate rebalancing act by policymakers: attempting to dismantle administrative hurdles for scientific research while simultaneously safeguarding public health.
- **The Core Thesis: Transitioning to Agile Regulation**
 - The central objective of these structural shifts is to deregulate the pharmaceutical Research and Development (R&D) sector. By cutting down the compliance drag, the policy environment aims to enable homegrown start-ups, research institutes, and established legacy manufacturers to quickly initiate testing and chemical analysis. The underlying philosophy is that speed in the laboratory translates directly to competitive advantages in global drug discovery.
- **Streamlining the R&D Value Chain**
 - As detailed in the documentation from **image_53547f.jpg**, the introduction of a seamless, online intimation system creates an instant gateway for importing small quantities of drugs intended solely for non-clinical testing. By entirely eliminating the requirement for a traditional, time-consuming import license for small testing lots, the administrative bottleneck that historically delayed early-stage research by months is removed.
- **Rationalizing the Shelf-Life Matrix**
 - A major substantive shift involves changing the minimum residual shelf-life requirement for imported drugs from a percentage-based metric (more than 60%) to a flat temporal metric (minimum of 12 months at the time of import).
 - *The Logic:* A percentage-based rule unintentionally penalizes highly stable drugs with long lifespan profiles. For instance, if a specialized chemical agent has a total shelf life of 5 years, requiring more than 60% means it cannot be imported if it has "only" 2.5 years of validity left—even though 30 months is more than enough time for laboratory analysis or patient consumption. Shifting to an absolute 12-month standard injects massive flexibility and efficiency into the pharmaceutical supply chain.
- **Risk-Proportionate Safeguards**
 - The regulatory easing is not a blanket policy of blind liberalization. A key argument embedded in this framework is **differentiated risk management**. The simplified, acknowledgement-based import process explicitly excludes sensitive, high-risk categories such as:
 - Sex hormones
 - Cytotoxic drugs (chemotherapy agents)
 - Beta-lactam antibiotics
 - Biologics containing live microorganisms
 - Narcotic and psychotropic substances
 - Furthermore, the 60% residual shelf-life rule is strictly preserved for biological products and radiopharmaceuticals. This ensures that the speed of business does not compromise public safety when dealing with volatile or dangerous compounds.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **The Colonial Foundation (1940–1945):** The enactment of the *Drugs Act, 1940* and the subsequent *Drugs Rules, 1945* were initially designed by the British administration to prevent the dumping of sub-standard imported medicines into the Indian market. The framework was deeply paternalistic, highly centralized, and rooted in a pre-independence economic reality where India lacked domestic manufacturing depth.

- **The Process Patent Era & Self-Reliance (1970s):** The passage of the *Patents Act, 1970* marks a massive turning point. By recognizing only "process patents" rather than "product patents" for medicines, India allowed its domestic industry to reverse-engineer expensive global drugs and manufacture them via alternative, low-cost chemical pathways. This birthed the domestic generic drug industry, earning India the title of the "Pharmacy of the World," though the regulatory focus remained heavily fixed on mass manufacturing rather than novel R&D.

- **The WTO-TRIPS Realignment (2005):** To comply with the World Trade Organization's TRIPS agreement, India reintroduced product patents in 2005. This shift meant Indian pharmaceutical firms could no longer simply copy newly discovered global drugs. It created an urgent economic necessity to pivot toward genuine, indigenous drug discovery and high-end clinical research.

- **The Regulatory Modernization Drive (2019–Present):** Recognizing that old bureaucratic processes were stifling innovation, the government enacted the *New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019*, which truncated the approval timelines for clinical studies. This culminated in a major milestone in January 2026, when the Ministry introduced a notification system for domestic test licenses. The mid-2026 proposal extends this exact philosophy to global imports, representing a comprehensive transition toward an automated, digitized, and trust-based regulatory state.

COMPREHENSIVE IAS EXAM PREPARATION BLUPRINT: STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

(Illustrative Content)

PRELIMS

STAGE 1: PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION (Illustrative)

PAPER I: GS (Illustrative)



History



Geography



Geography



Features



Polity



Parliament



Economics



Coins

- Objective Format
- Two Papers
- Threshold Marks

PAPER II: CSAT (Illustrative)



Reasoning



Mathematics



English

PRELIMS TOPICS DISTRIBUTION
(Illustrative Data)



Knowledge stream



MAINS

STAGE 2: MAINS EXAMINATION (Illustrative)

PAPER I: ESSAY (Illustrative)



- Subjective Answers
- In-depth Analysis
- Skill-based Learning

GS PAPERS I-IV (Illustrative)



Society



History



Security



Ethics

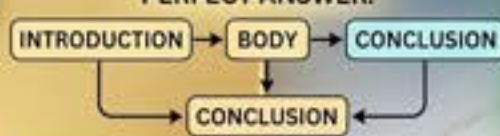
OPTIONAL SUBJECT (Illustrative)



Sociology Geography

- Subjective Answers
- In-depth Analysis
- Skill-based Learning

STRUCTURE OF A PERFECT ANSWER:



INTERVIEW

STAGE 3: PERSONALITY TEST (Illustrative)



DAF ANALYSIS (Illustrative)

Integrity DAF Analysis

PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES (Illustrative)

Integrity, Decisiveness, Balance, Communication, Skills, Problem Solving, etc.

MOCK INTERVIEWS (Illustrative)

- Face-to-Face Interaction
- Overall Personality Assessment
- Confidence

'China's Bangladesh ties doesn't target third party'

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

China's relation with Bangladesh does not "target" a third party, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Friday. The remark came soon after China expressed support for Bangladesh's Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project and said it will expedite a feasibility study.

The discussion on the Teesta river took place during Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's first official visit to China. Mr. Rahman was hosted by Premier Li Qiang and had a meeting with President Xi Jinping during June 25-26.

Mr. Xi, during his meeting with Mr. Rahman, assured that China will remain a "trusted friend" of Bangladesh and help in im-



Xi Jinping

plementing the development plans of the BNP government. Mr. Rahman on his part conveyed Bangladesh's commitment to "one China policy".

The two sides expressed support for "high quality cooperation" as part of the Belt and Road Initiative and work jointly towards modernisation. China supported greater role for Bangladesh in multilateral organisations like the UN, and supported "Bangla-

desh to participate in the BRICS" and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Mr. Rahman appreciated zero-tariff treatment for 100% tariff lines, and said Dhaka will help facilitate greater Chinese investments. The two sides agreed to advance modernisation of the Mongla port and develop a Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone (CEIZ) in Chittagong.

China also appreciated Bangladesh for hosting the Rohingya refugees of the Rakhine state who were evicted by Myanmar in 2017. China expressed support for "friendly consultation" with Myanmar and Bangladesh to settle the refugee crisis. The joint statement on the matter, however, did not use the term "Rohingya" and used "forcibly displaced people from Rakhine state of Myanmar".

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project (TRCMRP):** A massive, multi-purpose engineering initiative designed by Bangladesh to structurally overhaul the ecological and agricultural landscape of its northern plains. The project encompasses extensive river dredging to deepen the channel, building robust embankments to control erosion, creating large-scale water reservoirs, and developing modern irrigation networks. *Example:* Think of it as a massive engineered sponge system designed to catch and store the destructive volume of monsoon floods, later releasing that water systematically during the parched winter months to safeguard food security for millions of farmers.
- **One China Policy:** A foundational diplomatic rule and prerequisite for establishing official ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Under this policy, a partner nation formally recognizes that there is only one sovereign Chinese state in the world, that the PRC government is the sole legal representative of that state, and that Taiwan is an inalienable, inseparable province of China. Adhering to this means avoiding any official state-to-state diplomatic relations with Taiwan.
- **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):** China's flagship global infrastructure development strategy aimed at weaving an intricate web of connectivity across Asia, Europe, and Africa. It is divided into two structural components: the land-based "Silk Road Economic Belt" consisting of energy and transport corridors, and the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road," a network of strategic commercial ports and maritime trade lanes running across the Indian Ocean and into Europe.
- **Zero-Tariff Treatment for 100% Tariff Lines:** An absolute economic concession where a country completely eliminates all customs duties, import tariffs, and trade barriers across every single category of goods imported from a trading partner. *Example:* If Bangladesh exports ready-made garments, leather, or agricultural items into the Chinese market under this framework, these goods face zero import taxes at Chinese ports, rendering them instantly price-competitive against global rivals.
- **Multilateralism:** A collaborative governance framework where multiple sovereign nations work in tandem through formal global and regional institutional bodies to address shared security, political, and economic agendas. In the current context, this involves a global superpower championing a developing country's active inclusion and elevated institutional role within powerful elite blocs such as the United Nations, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- **Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone (CEIZ):** A designated, localized manufacturing and commercial enclave established within a host nation, customized with specialized infrastructure, deep-water logistics access, tax holidays, and simplified regulatory laws. The zone planned for Chittagong is designed to act as a dedicated manufacturing and export base for Chinese enterprises, integrating the host country directly into global industrial supply chains.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**
- **The Thesis of Strategic Benignity:** The core argument put forth in high-level regional dialogues is that the rapid deepening of bilateral ties between Beijing and Dhaka is grounded strictly in mutual economic development, infrastructure modernization, and domestic welfare. It is explicitly positioned as a sovereign partnership that does not target, threaten, or counter any "third party"—a diplomatic phrasing aimed directly at managing strategic anxieties in New Delhi.
- **Developmental Sovereignty via Mega-Infrastructure:** A principal argument is that developing nations possess an absolute sovereign right to seek technical and financial assistance from any global power to resolve deep-seated domestic crises. By accelerating the feasibility studies for the Teesta River project and modernizing crucial maritime assets like the Mongla port, the cooperation is presented as a vital step toward fulfilling domestic modernization blueprints rather than a geopolitically motivated maneuver.
- **The Principle of Structural Reciprocity:** The relationship thrives on a carefully balanced system of mutual diplomatic and economic concessions. China offers immense economic cushions—such as absolute zero-tariff access across all tariff lines and geopolitical backing for Dhaka's entry into elite global forums—while Bangladesh provides unwavering diplomatic reciprocity by reinforcing its alignment with the "One China Policy" and backing China's core territorial sensitivities.
- **Pragmatic Trilateral De-escalation of Humanitarian Crises:** On the deeply volatile issue of the Rohingya refugee crisis, the argument shifts toward a quiet, realpolitik-driven bilateralism. By consciously avoiding normative, rights-based international labels and adopting the neutral terminology of "forcibly displaced people from Rakhine state," the approach prioritizes a pragmatic, consultative trilateral mechanism involving Dhaka, Beijing, and Naypyidaw to negotiate repatriation free from Western human rights pressures.
- **The Strategic Counter-Perspective and Regional Realities:** Beneath the public declarations of trusted friendship lies a complex layer of regional security concern. For external observers, particularly India, the physical introduction of Chinese engineering, capital, and technical personnel into the Teesta River basin—which sits right next to the hyper-sensitive Siliguri Corridor—inevitably transforms a domestic livelihood project into a highly sensitive geopolitical friction point, raising concerns of strategic encirclement.





UNDERSTANDING SOUTH ASIAN GEOPOLITICS: BANGLADESH-CHINA-INDIA DYNAMICS

KEY TERMS & ILLUSTRATIONS

TRCMRP (Teesta River Comprehensive Management & Restoration Project)



One China Policy



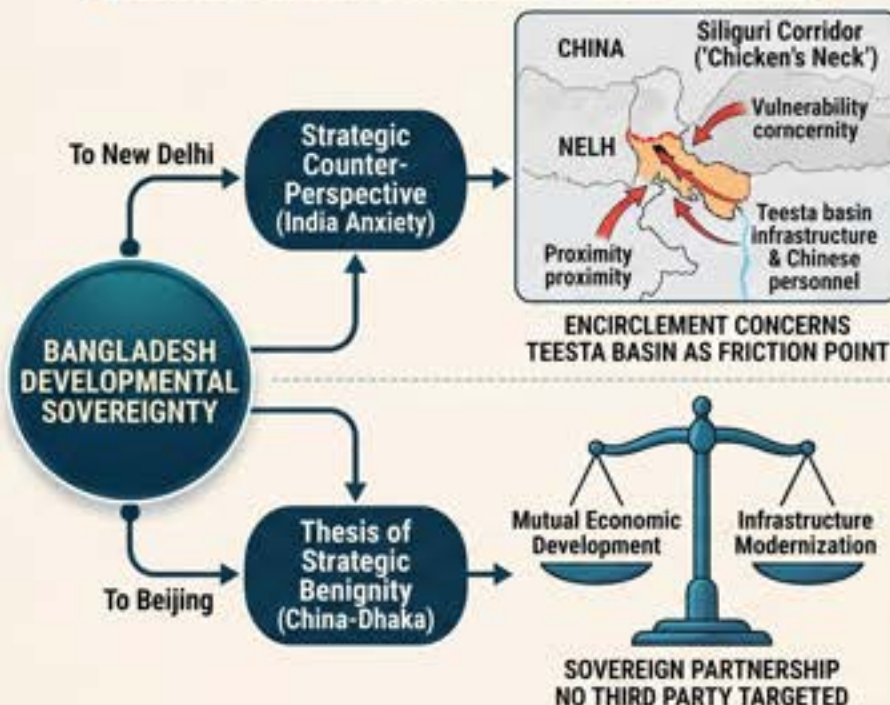
Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)



Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone (CEIZ)



MAIN ARGUMENTS & STRATEGIC POSTURES



MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS



HISTORICAL EVOLUTION



EXAM RELEVANCE & WAY FORWARD

SYLLABUS MAPPING
UPSC GS II, III, Essay, Optionals
PSIR/Geography
• Infrastructure
• Economic to Chintan norms
• Climate /adaptation PSIR/Geography

NCERT LINKAGES
Class XII Pol Sc, Class XI Geography
Class XI Geography
• Chapter 1: Chinan - Vemal Names
• Chapter 2: Chinese Easting

PAST YEAR QUESTIONS (PYQ)
• 2017 Prelims Teesta question
• 2017 Prelims Teesta Teesta question
• 2017 Prelims Teesta question, maintains parity with India

WAY FORWARD
• Expediting India's Consensus on Teesta
• India's Competitive LoCs
• Surveillance and Border Security
• Institutional Multi-Balancing by Dhaka



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UPSC CSE CLASSES - PRELIMS + MAINS + INTERVIEW GUIDANCE

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