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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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I. India Notifies WTO of Retaliatory Tariffs Against U.S.

Key Highlights for UPSC:

- **India's Move Against U.S. Tariff Hike:**

India has formally notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) of its proposal to impose retaliatory tariffs worth **\$724 million** on U.S. imports. This is in direct response to the U.S. increasing import tariffs by **25% ad valorem** on **passenger vehicles, light trucks, and specific automobile parts** originating from India on **March 26, 2025**.

- **Violation of WTO Agreements:**

India has argued that the U.S. tariff hike constitutes **safeguard measures** and violates key WTO norms, specifically the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1994**, and the **Agreement on Safeguards (AoS)**. The U.S. did not notify these measures to the WTO as required under **Article 12.1** of the AoS.



- **India's Legal Basis Under WTO Provisions:**

India has invoked **Article 8 of the AoS**, which allows a country to suspend WTO concessions **without prior consultation** if another member applies a safeguard measure without proper procedures. India claims its right to **suspend equivalent concessions** due to **adverse trade effects**.

- **Mini Trade Deal Context:**

The retaliatory notice comes even as **India and the U.S. are negotiating a "mini trade deal"**, with a recent Indian delegation led by **Special Secretary Rajesh Agarwal** visiting the U.S. This step may complicate the already delicate trade negotiations.

- **WTO Rules and Safeguards - Key Definitions:**

- **Safeguard Measures:** Temporary restrictions imposed by countries to protect a specific domestic industry from an unexpected surge in imports causing serious injury.
- **Retaliatory Tariffs:** Tariffs imposed in response to unfair trade practices by a trading partner, often permitted under WTO dispute mechanisms.

Additional Constitutional and Legal Insights (India):

- **Article 253 of the Indian Constitution:** Empowers Parliament to make laws for implementing international treaties and agreements, including WTO commitments.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Governs India's foreign trade policy and enables government action like tariff changes.

Conclusion:

India's retaliatory notice to the WTO reflects its assertion of rights under international trade law and its proactive defense of domestic industry interests. While it highlights tensions in India-U.S. trade ties, it also underscores the importance of **rules-based multilateralism** and the **WTO dispute settlement framework**.

For UPSC aspirants, this case is a **relevant example of India's international economic diplomacy**, legal use of WTO provisions, and real-world application of trade policy tools.

2. Nipah Virus Resurfaces in Kerala

Key Highlights for UPSC:

- **New Nipah Virus Cases in Kerala:**

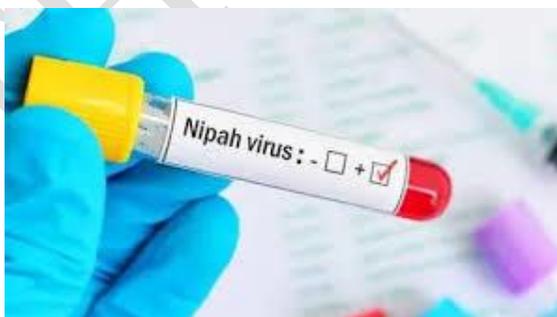
Kerala has reported **two new confirmed cases of Nipah virus infection**, including an 18-year-old girl who died of **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)** in Kozhikode and a 38-year-old woman undergoing treatment in Malappuram district. The **National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune**, confirmed the latest infection.

- **Contact Tracing and Quarantine Measures:**

Following the death of the 18-year-old, **medical staff and post-mortem team** have been quarantined. The government has identified **345 close contacts**, including 211 from Malappuram, 91 from Palakkad, and 43 from Kozhikode, and initiated **containment and surveillance protocols**.

- **Previous Case in May 2025:**

A **42-year-old woman** had tested positive for Nipah virus in **early May** in Malappuram. She is still recovering, indicating a **continued chain of infection** over recent months, raising serious **public health concerns**.



- **Health Department's Proactive Measures:**

The Kerala Health Department, led by Minister **Veena George**, started containment in Palakkad even before the recent case was confirmed. **Route maps of infected individuals have been published**, and **districts of Kozhikode, Malappuram, and Palakkad** are now on **high alert**.

- **Definition of Key Term – Nipah Virus:**

- A **zoonotic virus** (transmitted from animals to humans) first identified in **Malaysia in 1998**.
- Causes **severe respiratory illness and encephalitis** (inflammation of the brain), with a **case fatality rate of 40%–75%**.
- Spread through contact with **infected bats, pigs, or humans**, especially via body fluids.

Constitutional & Legal Framework (India):

- **Entry 6 of the State List (Seventh Schedule):** Public health and sanitation fall under state jurisdiction, making state governments primarily responsible during health emergencies.
- **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897:** Empowers both **central and state governments** to implement measures to contain the spread of infectious diseases.
- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Allows broader coordination and resource deployment during **health-related disasters** like pandemics or outbreaks.

Additional UPSC-Relevant Points:

- **Zoonotic Diseases and Urbanization:** Increasing interaction between humans and wildlife due to urban sprawl contributes to rising zoonotic diseases like Nipah, Ebola, and COVID-19.
- **One Health Approach:** A globally promoted interdisciplinary approach connecting **human, animal, and environmental health**, vital for managing outbreaks of zoonotic origin.

Conclusion:

The resurfacing of Nipah virus in Kerala reaffirms the **recurring public health risks from zoonotic infections** in India. The incident underlines the importance of **rapid surveillance, interdepartmental coordination, and robust healthcare infrastructure**. For UPSC aspirants, this episode illustrates the intersection of **health governance, constitutional provisions, and global health security**, making it a **highly relevant topic** under **GS Paper II (Governance)** and **GS Paper III (Science & Technology and Disaster Management)**.

3. Naga Tribes Protest Job Reservation Policy

Key Highlights for UPSC:

- **Naga Tribes Announce Protest:**
Five major Naga tribes — **Angami, Ao, Lotha, Rengma, and Sumi** — have announced a **protest on July 9** against Nagaland's existing **job reservation policy**, in place since **1977**. The protest is being led by the **Committee on Review Reservation Policy (CRRP)**.
- **Demand for Review of 48-Year-Old Policy:**
The CRRP contends that the **reservation for 11 'backward' tribes** (including 7 from eastern Nagaland) **no longer reflects current socio-economic and educational realities**. While affirming support for equitable development, the committee argues the existing list and criteria are outdated and unjustified today.
- **Failed Promises and Government Response:**
The State government **failed to review the policy in 1987**, and extended it indefinitely in 1989. Though the Deputy CM promised a review commission by **June 17**, the delay and the Chief Minister's remark about waiting until **post-2027 Census** have led to disappointment and resumption of agitation.
- **Reservation and Administrative Reform Concerns:**
CM Neiphiu Rio stated that **major administrative changes**, including **reservation and delimitation**, should only be considered after the **next national Census in 2027** due to the complexity of these reforms.





Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 16(4) of the Indian Constitution:** Allows the State to make provisions for reservation in appointments for any backward class of citizens which, in the State's opinion, is not adequately represented.
- **Article 371A:** Grants special provisions to Nagaland regarding **customary laws, land, and resources**, giving the state greater autonomy — making **local tribal policies sensitive and constitutionally unique**.
- **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006**, though national, also influences tribal entitlement frameworks indirectly.

Definition of Key Terms:

- **Reservation Policy:** A system of affirmative action aimed at **ensuring representation** of historically disadvantaged communities (SCs, STs, OBCs) in **education, jobs, and politics**.
- **Delimitation:** Redrawing of boundaries of electoral constituencies based on the latest census to ensure fair representation.

Additional Points Relevant for UPSC:

- **Regionalism & Identity Politics:** This protest reflects **intra-tribal socio-economic disparities** and **regionalism**, a key GS Paper II theme under **Indian Society and Governance**.
- **Policy Review Challenges:** The issue also highlights **challenges of policy stagnation**, and the complexities of **updating affirmative action frameworks** in the absence of recent data (next Census in 2027).

Conclusion:

The renewed protest by Naga tribes underscores the **need for periodic review and rationalisation of reservation policies** to align them with present-day socio-economic realities. While the intent of affirmative action remains vital, **equity within Scheduled Tribes themselves** has emerged as a core issue. For UPSC aspirants, this case is a live example of the **interplay between constitutional rights, identity politics, administrative inertia, and federal-state dynamics** — especially relevant for **GS II (Governance & Constitution)** and **GS I (Society & Regionalism)**.

4. Two Democracies and the Echoes of Tyranny

Key Highlights for UPSC:

- **Independence Day and Democratic Vigilance:**
The article reflects on **July 4 (U.S. Independence Day)** to emphasize that **democratic values must be actively defended**. Judge J. Michael Luttig, a U.S. Federal Judge, warns that democracy does not survive merely by written laws — it requires **constant civic participation and accountability**.

- **India's 1975 Emergency — A Case of Legal Tyranny:**

The **Emergency (1975–77)** under **Indira Gandhi** is cited as a key example of **democracy eroding from within**. Over **1,00,000** citizens were **jailed**, **press was censored**, and **constitutional rights were suspended** — all using legal provisions like **Article 352** and **MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act)**. **Judiciary, media, and bureaucracy failed** to resist authoritarian overreach, except a few like **Justice H.R. Khanna**.

- **Constitutional Vulnerabilities and Warnings Ignored:**

H.V. Kamath, a Constituent Assembly member, had warned that **Emergency powers in the Constitution resembled Germany's Weimar Constitution**, which Hitler used to rise to power. His plea for strong **checks and balances** was ignored — and 26 years later, it became a **tool for constitutional authoritarianism** in India.



- **Parallels in the United States Today:**

Former U.S. President **Donald Trump's** actions — including threats to **undermine the Constitution**, **manipulate law enforcement**, and **bypass Congress** — are compared to the **institutional failure seen during India's Emergency**. With a compliant legislature and judiciary, **tyranny threatens from within**, not from foreign invasion or coups.

- **Constitutionalism is Not Self-Executing:**

The article argues that **laws and constitutions don't protect democracy on their own**. Institutions must be upheld by **people of integrity** — be it judges, journalists, legislators, or citizens. The **44th Constitutional Amendment Act** in India attempted to correct some of the Emergency-era damage, but **democratic culture** also needs safeguarding.

Important Constitutional & Legal Provisions (India):

- **Article 352** – Proclamation of National Emergency on grounds of war, external aggression, or *internal disturbance* (now amended to "armed rebellion").
- **Article 21** – Right to Life; was **suspended during the Emergency** (ADM Jabalpur Case), except by dissenting Justice H.R. Khanna.
- **44th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1978** – Enacted to **prevent misuse of Emergency powers**, and **restored fundamental rights protections** (especially Article 21 and 22).
- **MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act)** – Preventive detention law used during Emergency to arrest dissenters without trial.

Definitions of Key Concepts:

- **Democratic Backsliding:** A gradual decline in the quality of democracy, marked by erosion of checks and balances, curtailment of rights, and weakening of institutions.
- **Constitutional Authoritarianism:** When **legal tools are used to undermine democratic values** and centralize power in one authority, often under the guise of law and order.
- **Preventive Detention:** Detaining a person to prevent them from committing a potential offense, **without trial**, often controversial under democratic norms.

Additional Key Points for GS Papers:

- **GS Paper II – Polity & Governance:**
This topic is highly relevant for questions on **judicial independence, role of the Constitution, checks and balances, and Emergency provisions.**
- **GS Paper I – Modern History & Indian Society:**
The Emergency period is a landmark in post-independence India, shaping **civil liberties discourse** and public trust in institutions.
- **GS Paper IV – Ethics in Governance:**
Illustrates the importance of **individual moral courage** (e.g., Justice H.R. Khanna), and **institutional integrity** in upholding democratic values.

Conclusion:

The article powerfully underscores that **tyranny does not always arrive with a coup** — it can arrive **legally, gradually, and silently**, when institutions hollow out and **citizens stop resisting**. India's Emergency is not just a historical memory but a **living lesson**. For democracies like India and the U.S., the battle today is not just to **preserve the Constitution**, but to **protect its spirit** — through **accountability, civic courage, and institutional resilience**. In the words of Thomas Paine, *“Let the law be king.”* And for that, **the people must remain its vigilant guardians.**

5. China's Proxy Strategy in India-Pakistan Conflict

Key Highlights for UPSC:

- **China Used Pakistan as a Proxy Against India:**
During **Operation Sindoor**, Lt. General **Rahul R. Singh** (Deputy Chief of Army Staff) revealed that **China strategically used the India-Pakistan conflict as a "live lab"** to test its weapons and tactics indirectly, following the **ancient Chinese stratagem** of “killing with a borrowed knife.” **China avoided direct confrontation**, instead supporting Pakistan through **military hardware and intelligence.**
- **Extent of Chinese Involvement:**
China's role went **beyond intelligence-sharing**, as **81% of Pakistan's military hardware** over the last five years has been sourced from China. This made **Pakistan a functional extension of Chinese military objectives**, allowing Beijing to **observe weapon efficacy** in real-time conflict without direct engagement.
- **Role of Turkiye and Multi-Front Threats:**
The conflict also saw the **involvement of Turkiye**, adding to the complexity of a **three-adversary situation** — with **Pakistan as the front**, and **China and Turkiye** in support. This **multi-domain threat perception** marks a shift in India's security environment.





- **Lessons from Operation Sindoor:**

The operation highlighted critical areas for India's defence preparedness:

- **Need for robust air defence systems**, particularly to counter **drone swarms**.
- **Indigenisation of defence manufacturing** to reduce dependency on foreign equipment.
- **Secure and timely supply chains**, as delayed deliveries of foreign military equipment affected operational readiness.

- **Vulnerability of Civilian Targets:**

While **population centres were not targeted** in the recent conflict, Lt. General Singh warned that **future conflicts may involve attacks on civilian infrastructure**, emphasizing the need for comprehensive **civil defence planning** alongside military preparedness.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions (India):

- **Article 246 & Schedule VII (Union List):**

Defence of India, armed forces, and war powers fall exclusively under **the Union List**, enabling the central government to act on matters of national security and defence.

- **Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) & Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP):**

Legal frameworks to encourage **indigenisation, FDI in defence, and private participation** in strategic military technologies.

- **National Security Act, 1980 & Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA):**

Empower the state to act against foreign-backed internal threats, proxy actors, and hybrid warfare.

Definition of Key Terms:

- **Operation Sindoor:** A recent strategic military operation (specific operational details not disclosed publicly) where India faced coordinated adversarial tactics from Pakistan, with **Chinese and Turkish support**.
- **"Killing with a Borrowed Knife":** One of the **36 Stratagems of Ancient Chinese Warfare**, meaning to **indirectly weaken an adversary by using others** to do the job — a metaphor for **proxy warfare**.
- **Drone Swarms:** A **new-age military threat** involving multiple drones used in coordination, often autonomously, to target enemy assets or create surveillance disruption.

UPSC-Relevant Themes:

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):**

Proxy war dynamics, China-Pakistan-Turkiye strategic alignment, regional security architecture.

- **GS Paper III (Internal Security):**

Border security, technology-driven threats (e.g., drones), indigenisation of defence.

- **GS Paper III (Science & Tech – Security):**

Emphasis on **AI-powered warfare, unmanned systems, air defence tech, and cyber warfare preparedness**.

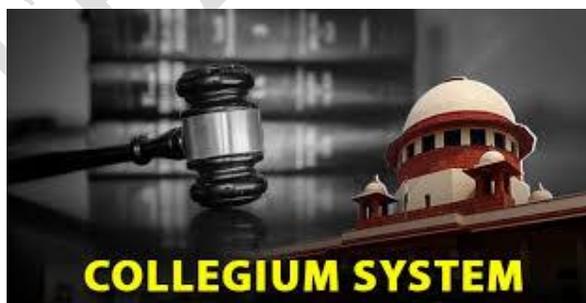
Conclusion:

The revelations from Operation Sindoor reflect a **shift in modern warfare tactics**, where **proxy states, drone technology, and supply chain vulnerabilities** define new-age threats. China's strategy of using Pakistan as a **testing ground for weapons and influence** exemplifies how **indirect conflict can be as destructive as direct war**. For India, this reinforces the urgency of **developing self-reliant defence capabilities**, securing critical supply chains, and investing in **air and cyber defence infrastructure**. The **future of national security lies not only in conventional military strength but also in strategic foresight, technological edge, and resilient institutions**.

6. Collegium System & Judicial Appointments

Key Highlights for UPSC:

- **CJI Pledges Transparency in Judicial Appointments:**
Chief Justice of India (CJI) **B.R. Gavai** assured that the **collegium system** will function with "**complete transparency**", and judicial appointments will be based on **merit and inclusive representation**, free from external influence.
- **Merit, Inclusion, and Fair Representation Stressed:**
The CJI emphasized that **merit would never be compromised**, and efforts are being made to ensure **representation from all sections of society** in judicial appointments — a nod to **diversity and social justice** within the judiciary.
- **Addressing Alleged Interference:**
In response to **Justice Dipankar Datta's concerns** over possible interference in collegium functioning, CJI Gavai assured that **every name recommended would be treated fairly** and no recommendation would be overlooked.
- **Collegium Reform Continuity:**
The CJI acknowledged that steps toward transparency in the collegium system had already begun under **former CJI Sanjiv Khanna**, highlighting **institutional continuity** in addressing judicial reform.
- **Collegium System Clarified:**
The CJI reaffirmed that the **Supreme Court is not CJI-centric** — emphasizing that the Chief Justice is merely "**first among equals**", underscoring the **collective nature** of judicial decision-making.



Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 124 & 217 of the Indian Constitution:**
Deal with the **appointment of Supreme Court and High Court judges**, respectively. Appointments are made by the **President in consultation with the Chief Justice of India and other senior judges**.



- **Collegium System (Judicially Created):**
A system developed through **judicial precedent**, especially the **Three Judges Cases (1981, 1993, 1998)**. It entrusts the **power of judicial appointments** to a collegium of senior judges led by the CJI.
- **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act, 2014:**
Proposed a constitutional body for judicial appointments, but **was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015** for violating the **basic structure** of judicial independence.

Key Definitions:

- **Collegium System:**
A mechanism by which appointments and transfers of judges are decided by a **forum of the Chief Justice and four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court (or relevant High Court)**, without political or executive interference.
- **Transparency in Judiciary:**
Refers to **openness in procedures, disclosure of reasons for decisions, and public accountability**, while balancing judicial independence.

UPSC-Relevant Themes:

- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):**
Topics such as **judicial independence, separation of powers, judicial reforms, and role of constitutional institutions** are directly addressed.
- **GS Paper IV (Ethics & Integrity):**
The emphasis on **merit, fairness, and transparency** relates to the ethical dimensions of institutional functioning.

Conclusion:

CJI Gavai's assurance marks a **crucial reaffirmation of public trust** in the judiciary amid growing scrutiny of the **opaque collegium system**. The emphasis on **transparency, inclusion, and institutional accountability** reflects ongoing efforts to **strengthen judicial credibility**. While the judiciary defends its **independence from executive overreach**, internal reforms like **greater transparency and diversity in appointments** are key to ensuring that **judicial legitimacy is both constitutionally sound and socially representative**.

7. PIL Seeks Protection for Kolhapuri Chappals' GI Rights

Key Highlights for UPSC:

- **PIL Filed to Protect GI Rights of Kolhapuri Chappals:**
A **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** has been filed in the **Bombay High Court** seeking judicial intervention to **protect the Geographical Indication (GI) status of Kolhapuri chappals** from alleged **cultural appropriation and commercial misuse** by luxury brand **Prada**.
- **Allegation of Design Imitation:**
The PIL alleges that **Prada's Spring/Summer 2026 collection** showcased **toe-ring sandals** that

closely resemble the traditional Kolhapuri chappals, violating the spirit of GI protection by appropriating a culturally significant design without acknowledgment or benefit to the artisans.

- **Entities Named in the PIL:**

The petition has been filed against:

- Prada Group (Italy)
- Prada India Fashion Pvt. Ltd.
- Maharashtra's Social Justice and Special Assistance Department
- Leather Industries Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd.
- Directorate of Industries



- **Concerns of Cultural Appropriation:**

The PIL brings attention to **foreign brands profiting from indigenous designs** without respecting **heritage or legal rights**. It demands a framework to **prevent cultural exploitation** and **protect the livelihoods of local artisans**.

- **Legal and Institutional Accountability:**

The petition also questions the **lack of government action** to safeguard the interests of **registered GI holders** and artisans in **Maharashtra**, urging the court to direct relevant authorities to enforce GI protections effectively.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 29(1):** Protects the rights of **cultural and linguistic minorities** to conserve their heritage.
- **The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999:**
 - Provides **legal protection to GI products in India**.
 - **Kolhapuri chappals received GI tag in 2019** under this Act, jointly by **Maharashtra and Karnataka**.
 - GI rights ensure that only registered users or authorized manufacturers can use the name for commercial purposes.
- **The Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Heritage** (linked to **TRIPS Agreement** under WTO):
India is a signatory and obligated to **safeguard traditional products and indigenous designs**.

Definitions of Key Terms:

- **Public Interest Litigation (PIL):**
A legal action initiated in a court **not by the aggrieved party**, but in **public interest**, to **protect rights or enforce laws affecting the public**.
- **Geographical Indication (GI):**
A **sign used on products** that have a **specific geographical origin** and possess **qualities or reputation** due to that origin (e.g., Darjeeling tea, Mysore silk, Kolhapuri chappals).



- **Cultural Appropriation:**
The **unauthorized or exploitative use of elements** of one culture (often traditional or indigenous) by members of another, typically **without permission or benefit to the originators**.

UPSC-Relevant Themes:

- **GS Paper II – Governance & Polity:**
PIL as a tool for **judicial activism**, **role of government departments in protecting cultural rights**, and **GI laws enforcement**.
- **GS Paper III – Economy & IPR:**
Covers **Intellectual Property Rights**, **GI tag significance**, **local industry protection**, and **artisans' welfare**.
- **GS Paper I – Indian Culture & Heritage:**
Kolhapuri chappals as a case of **traditional Indian craftsmanship** and the challenge of **cultural commodification**.

Conclusion:

The PIL highlights the **need for stronger legal safeguards and enforcement mechanisms** to protect India's **traditional crafts from global exploitation**. GI tags are not merely commercial identifiers—they are **symbols of cultural identity, local pride, and livelihood for artisans**. This case also reiterates the importance of **effective government oversight** and **international brand accountability**. For UPSC aspirants, it offers a vital intersection of **law, culture, intellectual property, and governance** — showcasing how local traditions must be shielded in the age of global markets.

8. India's Aluminium & Copper Vision Documents Unveiled

Key Highlights for UPSC:

- **Vision for a Six-Fold Increase by 2047:**
India launched two key strategic documents — the **Aluminium Vision Document** and the **Copper Vision Document** — with targets to **increase aluminium production six-fold** and **meet a six-fold rise in copper demand by 2047**, aligning with **PM Modi's "Viksit Bharat @2047"** mission.
- **Aluminium Sector Roadmap:**
The Aluminium Vision Document outlines:
 - **Expansion of bauxite production to 150 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum).**
 - **Doubling of aluminium recycling rate.**
 - **Promotion of low-carbon technologies.**
 - **Reforms for raw material security and investment.**
 - **Focus on aluminium's key role in clean energy, electric mobility, defence, and infrastructure.**

- **Copper Sector Strategy:**

The Copper Vision Document aims to:

- Add **5 MTPA smelting and refining capacity by 2030.**
- Boost **secondary refining and domestic recycling.**
- **Secure overseas copper resources** through international partnerships.
- Ensure **self-reliance in critical copper supply**, crucial for **EVs, solar, wind, and power infrastructure.**

- **India's Current Global Standing:**

- India is the **2nd largest aluminium producer** but contributes only **6% of global output.**
- Copper demand is set to **increase sharply** due to India's **energy transition and infrastructure needs.**
- Both sectors currently face **import-dependence and supply-chain vulnerability**, particularly for copper.



- **Consultation-Driven, Industry-Aligned Approach:**

The vision documents were prepared following **extensive consultations with industry stakeholders**, indicating a **public-private partnership approach** toward building a **resilient, green, and globally competitive metals sector.**

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 246 and Schedule VII (Union List):**
Places **mineral regulation and development** under the Union Government's jurisdiction.
- **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act):**
Governs exploration, extraction, and development of minerals. It supports **auction-based allocation** and **sustainable mining practices.**
- **National Mineral Policy, 2019:**
Promotes **private sector participation, sustainable development, and value addition in mining.** It supports **vision-based long-term planning.**
- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):**
Mandatory for large mining and smelting operations, ensures that **environmental sustainability** is integrated into metal-sector expansion.

Definitions of Key Terms:

- **Geographical Indication (GI):**
A tag that signifies **unique origin-based product identity** (not applicable here directly, but helpful context for comparative policy).
- **Bauxite:**
The **raw ore** used in aluminium production.



- **Smelting & Refining:**
Smelting involves **extracting metal from its ore using heat**, and refining is **purification** to make it usable in industries.
- **Secondary Refining:**
Refers to **metal recovery from scrap/recycled material**, a key to achieving **circular economy and green targets**.
- **Viksit Bharat @2047:**
A national vision to transform India into a **developed country by its 100th year of independence**.

UPSC-Relevant Themes:

- **GS Paper III (Economy & Industry):**
Covers **mineral resource planning, manufacturing competitiveness, import substitution, and green economy**.
- **GS Paper III (Environment):**
Focus on **low-carbon tech, sustainable mining, and clean energy linkages**.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):**
Involves **policy reforms, public-private cooperation, and Centre–State coordination** on mineral development.

Conclusion:

India's Aluminium and Copper Vision Documents lay the **foundation for long-term industrial resilience and resource self-reliance**, crucial for achieving **energy security, sustainable infrastructure, and global competitiveness**. The focus on **indigenisation, circular economy, and green technologies** aligns with India's developmental and environmental goals under "**Viksit Bharat @2047**". These blueprints also reflect India's strategic intent to **secure critical mineral supply chains** in an increasingly geopolitically sensitive and tech-driven global economy. For UPSC aspirants, the initiative represents the **convergence of economic planning, sustainability, and national security**.

9. Russia Recognizes Taliban Regime

Key Highlights for UPSC:

- **Russia Becomes First Country to Recognize Taliban Government:**
On July 4, 2025, **Russia formally recognized the Taliban regime** in Afghanistan, making it the **first nation** to do so since the Taliban took power in **August 2021** after the U.S. withdrawal.
- **Diplomatic Move Formalized with Ambassador's Credentials:**
Russia's **Foreign Ministry accepted credentials** from **Gul Hassan Hassan**, the newly appointed **Ambassador of Afghanistan**, thereby granting **official diplomatic recognition** to the Taliban-led government.

- **Aim to Foster Bilateral Cooperation:**
Russia stated that the recognition will lead to “**productive bilateral cooperation**”, opening doors to enhanced **economic, political, and security partnerships** in Central Asia, especially around **counterterrorism and regional stability**.
- **Taliban and China React Positively:**
 - **Taliban’s Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi** termed the move “historic” and urged **other countries to follow Russia’s example**.
 - **China welcomed Russia’s step**. Although it has not formally recognized the Taliban, it **hosts a Taliban Ambassador in Beijing**, indicating **de facto engagement**.
- **Russia Removes Taliban from 'Outlawed Organizations' List:**
The recognition follows Russia's **removal of the Taliban from its list of banned organizations**, which had included it due to its earlier classification as a **terrorist group**.

Constitutional & Legal Context (India and International):

- **India’s Official Stand:**
India has **not officially recognized** the Taliban regime. It advocates for an **inclusive and democratic government** in Afghanistan, emphasizing protection of **women’s rights and minorities**, and adherence to **UN norms**.
- **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961):**
This international treaty outlines the **rules of diplomatic engagement and recognition**, including the **presentation of credentials by ambassadors**, a key indicator of **formal recognition**.
- **UN Position:**
The **United Nations has not recognized** the Taliban government as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. The Afghan seat at the UN is still held by a representative of the **previous (Ashraf Ghani-led) government**.



Definitions of Key Terms:

- **Diplomatic Recognition:**
The **formal acknowledgment by one state** that another political entity possesses the qualifications of statehood or government under international law.
- **De Facto vs De Jure Recognition:**
 - **De facto:** Practical recognition (e.g., hosting embassies or envoys) without legal endorsement.
 - **De jure:** Full legal recognition of a government or regime.
- **Outlawed Organization:**
A group declared **illegal or banned** by a nation, often on grounds of **terrorism, extremism, or threat to national security**.

UPSC-Relevant Themes:

- **GS Paper II – International Relations:**
Covers **India's neighborhood policy**, **recognition of regimes**, **bilateral diplomacy**, and **implications of great power politics**.
- **GS Paper III – Security Issues:**
Includes **terrorism**, **regional security dynamics**, and **foreign engagement in conflict zones**.
- **GS Paper I – World History (Optional):**
For PSIR/International Relations optional students, Russia's recognition marks a **significant geopolitical shift** in Eurasian politics.

Conclusion:

Russia's recognition of the **Taliban regime** marks a **significant geopolitical shift**, potentially reshaping regional diplomacy, security alliances, and engagement strategies in **South and Central Asia**. While it may **pave the way for formal recognition** by other regional powers like **China and Iran**, global consensus remains fragmented. For India, this development requires **careful recalibration** of its **Afghanistan strategy**, especially considering concerns about **cross-border terrorism**, **humanitarian issues**, and **India's long-term investments** in Afghan development. The move underlines how **geopolitical pragmatism** is **reshaping traditional notions of legitimacy in international diplomacy**.

10. India's Toy Industry: From Import-Dependent to Export Powerhouse

Key Highlights for UPSC:

1. **India Now Exports Toys to 153 Countries:**
Union Commerce and Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal** announced at the 16th Toy Biz International Expo 2025 that India's toy industry, once dependent on imports, now **exports toys to 153 nations**. This marks a significant transformation in domestic capability and global reach.
2. **Policy Support & Quality Control Boosted Domestic Production:**
Key government interventions such as the **Quality Control Order (QCO)** and support for **toy manufacturing clusters** have improved product standards, helping Indian toys meet **global quality benchmarks**.
 - QCO has instilled a **culture of quality consciousness**, aiding international competitiveness.
3. **Atmanirbhar Bharat & Vocal for Local Impact:**
The toy sector's success is part of India's broader **Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative**. The "**Vocal for Local**" campaign, once doubted, has now led to increased **consumer and entrepreneurial confidence** in domestic products.





4. Support for Startups & MSMEs:

- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY):** Now extended to **20 years**, provides **collateral-free loans** to toy startups, fostering innovation.
- **18 Toy Clusters** across the country have been supported under the **Ministry of MSME** for enhancing local production capabilities.

5. Vision for Global Market Domination:

Minister Goyal emphasized the need for better **design innovation, branding, and packaging** to compete globally.

A new **government promotional scheme** is being planned to support:

- **World-class manufacturing**
- **Design excellence**
- **Brand development**
- **Export readiness**

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 19(1)(g):**
Guarantees the **right to practice any profession or carry on any occupation, trade or business**, supporting MSMEs and entrepreneurship like in the toy industry.
- **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006:**
Provides legal framework for **promotion and development** of MSMEs, including toy clusters.
- **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS):**
Enforces quality standards through **Quality Control Orders**, especially crucial for export-quality goods like toys.

Definitions of Key Terms:

- **Quality Control Order (QCO):**
A legally enforceable order issued by the government to ensure that **goods meet minimum quality standards**, often backed by BIS certification.
- **Geographical Indication (GI):**
A form of **IP protection for products** linked to a specific region (not directly applicable to toys here but useful for context).
- **Collateral-Free Loan:**
A loan that does not require the borrower to pledge any asset, as in **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana**.

UPSC-Relevant Themes:

- **GS Paper III (Economy – Industry & Infrastructure):**
Covers **MSME support, export growth, manufacturing policy, and Make in India** initiatives.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):**
Government schemes like **PMMY, Vocal for Local, and Atmanirbhar Bharat** reflect governance strategies aimed at **economic self-reliance**.

- **GS Paper III (Internal Security & Economic Security):**
Import substitution and domestic capability building reduce **economic vulnerabilities and dependence on foreign products.**

Conclusion:

India's toy industry is a **case study in successful industrial transformation**, driven by **policy innovation, quality control, and entrepreneurial support**. From being an import-heavy sector to exporting to **153 countries**, it showcases the **realization of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Vocal for Local**. With government schemes, startup support, and growing global recognition, the Indian toy sector is set to emerge as a **significant global player**, contributing to **exports, employment, and innovation** in a rapidly growing market.

11. MSME Sector in India: Economic Significance and Government Initiatives

Key Points for UPSC Civil Services Exam:

1. **MSME Sector's Contribution to India's Economy:**
 - MSMEs contribute **30.1% to India's GDP**.
 - Account for **35.4% of total manufacturing output**.
 - Contribute **45.73% to India's exports**, highlighting their role in trade and foreign exchange earnings.
2. **Udyam and Udyam Assist Portals – Digital Registration & Support:**
 - Over **6.5 crore MSME units registered** (3.8 crore on Udyam Portal and 2.72 crore on Udyam Assist Portal).
 - These units generate employment for approximately **28 crore people**.
 - Udyam Portal provides a **paperless, self-declared registration** process promoting ease of doing business.
3. **Government Schemes for MSMEs and Employment Generation:**
 - **Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP):** Provided employment to over **80.33 lakh people**, with **80% in rural areas**.
 - **Credit Guarantee Scheme (CGS):** Approved credit guarantees worth **₹9.80 lakh crore** since inception; record ₹3 lakh crore extended in 2024-25. Special focus on **women and SC/ST entrepreneurs**.
 - MSME Samadhaan Portal effectively reduces **delayed payment issues** from 93,000 cases (2017) to 44,000 cases currently.





4. Support to Artisans and Traditional Trades:

- **PM Vishwakarma Scheme** provides **end-to-end support** to artisans in 18 traditional trades, preserving cultural heritage and promoting livelihoods.

5. Role of Organizations under MSME Ministry:

- Institutions like **KVIC, Coir Board, National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)** play key roles in spreading MSME-related schemes and promoting village industries.
- Mumbai-based **IDEMI (Institute for Design of Electrical Measuring Instruments)** supports MSME technology innovation and contributes components to space missions like **Chandrayaan**.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 19(1)(g) of the Indian Constitution:**
Guarantees the right to carry on any occupation, trade, or business, forming the basis for MSME development.
- **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006:**
Provides a legal framework for promotion, development, and enhancement of MSMEs.
- **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE):**
Supports collateral-free credit for MSMEs, aiding financial inclusion and entrepreneurship.

Definitions:

- **MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises):**
Enterprises defined based on investment in plant and machinery or equipment and annual turnover, playing a crucial role in industrial development and employment.
- **Udyam Registration:**
Government's online registration portal for MSMEs, facilitating easier access to benefits and schemes.
- **Credit Guarantee Scheme:**
A scheme that provides credit guarantees to banks and financial institutions for loans given to MSMEs without collateral security.

UPSC-Relevant Themes:

- **GS Paper III (Economy):**
Industrial development, MSME sector, employment generation, Make in India initiative, financial inclusion.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):**
Implementation of government schemes, digital governance, financial inclusion, rural development.
- **GS Paper I (Society):**
Role of traditional artisans, preservation of village industries, women and SC/ST entrepreneurship empowerment.



Conclusion:

The MSME sector remains a **cornerstone of India's economic growth and employment generation**, contributing significantly to GDP, manufacturing, and exports. Government initiatives like the **Udyam portal, PMEGP, PM Vishwakarma scheme, and Credit Guarantee Scheme** have strengthened MSMEs by providing easy registration, financial support, and promotion of traditional crafts. The sector's transformation towards **digitalization and financial inclusion** underlines India's vision of a **resilient and self-reliant economy**, fostering inclusive growth and sustainable development.

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