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FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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I. Digital Census 2027 and Early Data Availability

- **First Ever Digital Census with Self-Enumeration Option**
 - India's 2027 Census will be the first fully digital Census, conducted in two phases:
 - **Houselisting & Housing Census (HLO):** Starts April 2026.
 - **Population Enumeration (PE):** February 2027.
 - Citizens can self-enumerate via a **dedicated web portal**, using their mobile devices (Android, iOS) in English, Hindi, and regional languages.
- **Faster Data Availability and Use of Technology**
 - Earlier Censuses took 2–3 years to release data; now, technology will enable **early and electronic transmission** directly to a central server.
 - Enumerators and supervisors will use their own devices for data entry, increasing efficiency and minimizing delays.
- **Comprehensive Data Collection and Public Participation**
 - Data points include household structure, water and sanitation access, fuel type, ownership of digital devices, cereal consumption, etc.
 - Strong publicity campaigns will ensure **inclusive participation**, last-mile coverage, and accurate data collection.
 - Special emphasis on accurate and timely information to strengthen trust and participation.
- **Enumeration of Caste and Constitutional Context**
 - For the first time since Independence, caste of household members will be officially enumerated.
 - As per constitutional mandate, the **first Census after 2026 can be used for delimiting Lok Sabha constituencies** (Article 82 & 170 of the Constitution, read with 84th and 87th Constitutional Amendments).
- **Legal and Administrative Steps Taken**
 - Gazette notification issued on 16th June 2025, asking all States and UTs to republish the notification and appoint nodal officers.
 - States must ensure technical and administrative preparedness for smooth implementation.



Definitions

- **Census:** Total process of collecting, compiling, analyzing, and disseminating demographic, social, and economic data pertaining to all persons in a country at a specific time.



- **Self-enumeration:** Process where individuals fill out their own census details directly rather than through enumerators.

Conclusion

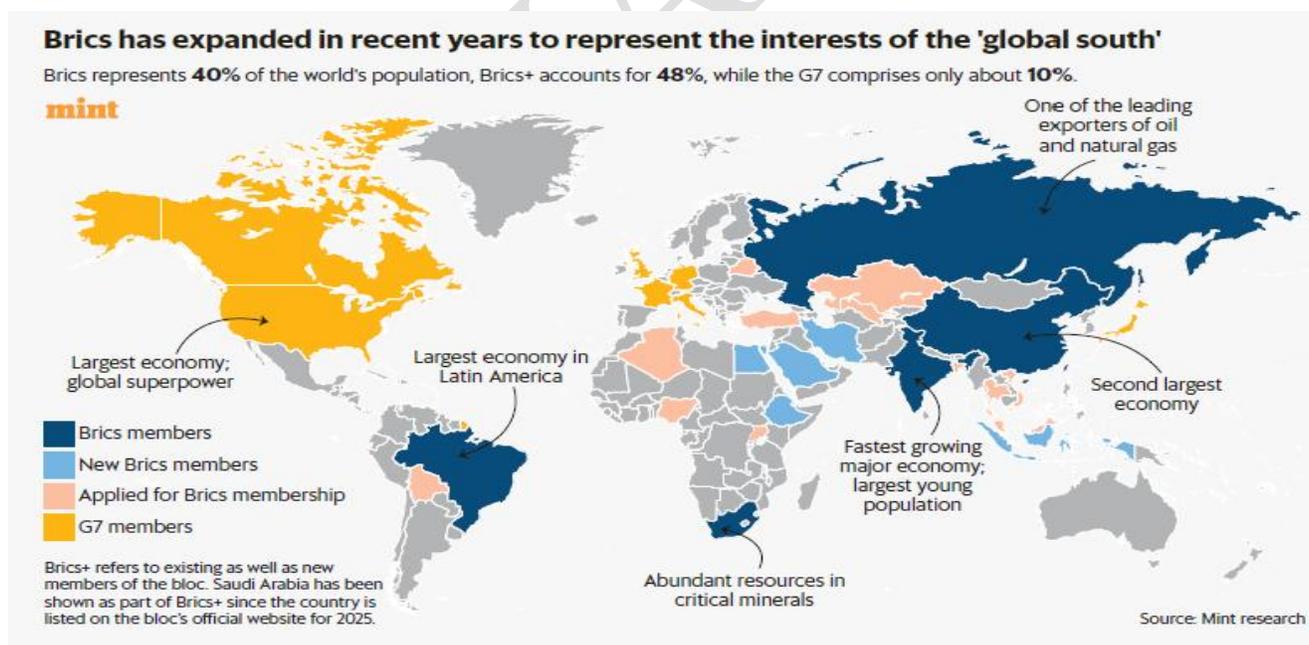
The 2027 Census represents a **paradigm shift** in India's demographic data collection, leveraging digital tools for faster, more transparent, and participatory data gathering. Enumerating caste and enabling self-enumeration are landmark moves likely to impact social policy, representation, and resource allocation.

UPSC Relevance

- Important for topics under **GS Paper 2 (Governance, Constitution, Social Justice)** and **GS Paper 1 (Society, Population & Demographics)**.
- Helps understand constitutional provisions on delimitation and representation.
- Relevant for essays on technological integration in governance, and for ethics case studies on transparency and inclusiveness in large-scale data collection.

2. Challenges for Global South and BRICS+ as a Geopolitical Force

- **Rise of BRICS+ and Economic Weight**
 - BRICS+ (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, plus new members like Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, UAE, and Indonesia) represents **48% of the world's population** and contributes **31% of global GDP in 2024**, up from 19% in 2010.



- G7, in comparison, now contributes 42% of global GDP (down from 49% in 2010), with only 10% of world population.
- Economic momentum in BRICS+ is largely driven by China (62% of BRICS+ GDP) and to some extent India (world's fastest-growing large economy).



- **Democratic Deficit and Internal Political Differences**
 - BRICS+ countries show wide variation in democratic values: only India and South Africa score high on the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Democracy Index**.
 - Other members like China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia have low scores due to authoritarian or dictatorial governance.
 - Differences in political systems weaken the group's ability to present a unified stance on global issues.
- **Divergent Strategic and Geopolitical Interests**
 - BRICS+ members have conflicting priorities and alliances — e.g., India's tensions with China, Russia's war with Ukraine affecting relations with Brazil and South Africa.
 - China's dominance within BRICS+ often marginalizes the interests of other members.
 - India faces a diplomatic balancing act: it has deep trade ties with BRICS+ countries but also strong strategic relations with G7, especially the US and UK.
- **Trade Dynamics and Economic Dependencies**
 - India's trade share: **35% with BRICS+** and **21% with G7** in FY25, reflecting the need to maintain strong relations with both blocs.
 - China's restrictions on critical minerals and US tariff threats further complicate India's strategic choices and economic security.
- **Limited Progress on Alternative Institutions and Currencies**
 - Despite discussions since 2015, BRICS+ has made little progress on developing an alternative currency or payments system to challenge dollar dominance.
 - This limits its capacity to become a truly independent economic pole vis-à-vis G7.

Definitions

- **Global South:** A term commonly used to refer to countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania, typically less economically developed, representing interests distinct from Western (Global North) countries.
- **Democracy Index:** Published by the EIU, measures state of democracy based on electoral process, government functioning, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties.

Conclusion

While BRICS+ has the potential to represent the Global South and challenge G7's dominance, **deep internal divisions, democratic weaknesses, and divergent national interests undermine its coherence and collective bargaining power**. Economic heft alone is not sufficient without shared political and institutional vision.

UPSC Relevance

- Relevant for **GS Paper 2 (International Relations)**: global groupings, power dynamics, and India's foreign policy choices.



- Important for **GS Paper 3 (Economy)**: global trade, strategic economic dependencies, and alternative currency mechanisms.
- Useful for **essay paper and ethics case studies** on balancing national interests, multilateralism, and global governance.
- Helps understand India's delicate role in reconciling ties with both BRICS+ and G7 while protecting national strategic and economic interests.

3. ₹5,000 Crore Investment to Develop Northeast Waterways

- **Major Infrastructure Boost to Northeast Waterways**

- The Government of India has announced an investment of ₹5,000 crore to develop and modernize waterways and the maritime sector in the Northeast region.
- This aims to strengthen inland water transport (IWT) networks, improve regional connectivity, and reduce logistical costs for trade and commerce.

- **Significance of Waterways for Northeast Development**

- The Northeast region, rich in rivers like the Brahmaputra and Barak, has significant potential for inland navigation.
- Waterways can provide an alternative, eco-friendly mode of transport compared to road and rail, supporting the region's economic integration with mainland India and neighboring countries like Bangladesh.

- **Past Achievements in Maritime and Shipping Sector**

- In the last 11 years, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has overseen record growth in cargo handling, port capacity, and coastal shipping.
- Examples include development under the **Sagarmala Programme**, aimed at port-led development and modernization of coastal infrastructure.



- **Constitutional and Legal Context**

- As per **Entry 24, List I (Union List)** of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution, shipping and navigation on inland waterways declared by Parliament to be national waterways fall under Union jurisdiction.
- The **National Waterways Act, 2016**, declared 111 waterways as national waterways, including key stretches in the Northeast like National Waterway-2 (Brahmaputra) and National Waterway-16 (Barak River).

- **Strategic and Geopolitical Importance**

- Enhancing waterways in the Northeast complements the Act East Policy, promoting connectivity with Southeast Asia.



- Strengthens economic and strategic linkages with Bangladesh through protocols on inland water transit and trade, enabling access to seaports like Chittagong and Mongla.

Definitions

- **Inland Water Transport (IWT):** Transport of goods and passengers through navigable rivers, canals, backwaters, and lakes within a country.
- **Sagarmala Programme:** Flagship initiative of the Government of India to promote port-led development through modernization, new port infrastructure, and hinterland connectivity.

Conclusion

The ₹5,000 crore investment signifies a strategic push to utilize the untapped potential of the Northeast's river systems, fostering inclusive economic growth, environmental sustainability, and enhanced regional integration. By improving IWT, India can reduce transport costs, decongest roads, and strengthen its geopolitical ties in the neighborhood.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 1:** Regional development, issues and challenges of Northeast India.
- **GS Paper 2:** India's Act East Policy, international relations with neighbors, cooperative federalism.
- **GS Paper 3:** Infrastructure development, logistics efficiency, environmental impact of transport modes.
- **Essay & Ethics:** Sustainable development, inclusive growth, balancing regional aspirations.

4. India's Call for BRICS Collaboration on Critical Minerals

- **India's Strategic Push for Secure Mineral Supply Chains**
 - At the **17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged BRICS nations to **collaborate on critical mineral supply chains**, emphasizing that no single nation should dominate or weaponize these resources.
 - This appeal is a clear message aimed at China, which currently controls about **90-95% of global rare earth processing capacity**, using its position to influence global markets.
- **Significance of Rare Earth Elements (REE)**
 - **Rare earth metals** are essential for strategic sectors like **renewable energy, electric mobility, electronics, defense, and advanced manufacturing**.
 - Global shortages and China's export restrictions (April 2024) have exposed vulnerabilities in supply chains, prompting India to seek diversified and resilient sourcing.





- **India's Alignment with Global Partners**
 - Modi's call aligns with the **Quad Critical Minerals Initiative** (with the US, Japan, and Australia), announced in July 2025, to secure and diversify critical mineral supply chains.
 - India aims to balance its partnerships — working within BRICS while also strengthening ties with Quad countries for economic security and strategic resilience.
- **Broader Global Governance Reforms**
 - Modi reiterated the need for urgent reforms in **global governance institutions** like the UN Security Council, IMF, World Bank, and WTO to better reflect 21st-century realities and ensure fair representation of developing nations.
 - This aligns with India's long-standing demand for a more inclusive global order, particularly representing the Global South.
- **Technology and AI Cooperation within BRICS**
 - Modi proposed an **AI Impact Summit** in India in 2026 to promote cooperation on responsible and ethical AI.
 - He emphasized "AI for All" as a guiding philosophy, highlighting India's active use of AI in sectors like agriculture, health, education, and governance, while underlining the need for global standards to ensure content authenticity and transparency.

Definitions

- **Rare Earth Elements (REE):** A group of 17 chemically similar elements crucial for high-tech and clean energy applications.
- **Weaponization of Resources:** Using control over critical natural resources as a geopolitical tool to exert pressure on other nations.

Constitutional and Legal Context

- While mineral development is primarily a **State subject (Entry 23, State List, Seventh Schedule)**, regulation and development of mines and minerals in the public interest fall under the **Union List (Entry 54)** when declared by Parliament.
- India's Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, regulates mining and mineral development, including strategic minerals.

Conclusion

India's call at the BRICS summit highlights a strategic move to counter China's monopolistic influence over critical minerals and push for collective resilience among emerging economies. By proposing cooperation in AI and advocating for global governance reforms, India seeks to enhance its leadership role in shaping a multipolar, inclusive global order.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** International Relations — India's foreign policy strategies, BRICS and Quad cooperation, reforms in global governance institutions.



- **GS Paper 3:** Economy — mineral resources, strategic industries, technological self-reliance.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** Global resource equity, ethical use of AI, responsible governance.
- **Essay & Interview:** Topics like resource nationalism, India's balancing act between major blocs, and technology diplomacy.

5. India-Norway Collaboration on Energy Transition

• India's Clean Energy Ambitions and Net-Zero Target

- India has set a target of achieving **net-zero carbon emissions by 2070**, in line with its commitments under the Paris Agreement (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions — INDCs).
- To achieve this, India is focusing on rapid energy transition by scaling up renewables, improving energy efficiency, and deploying advanced technologies.



• Seeking Norwegian Expertise

- Norway is a global leader in **clean energy solutions**, especially in offshore wind, hydropower, green hydrogen, and carbon capture technologies.
- India aims to leverage Norwegian technical know-how and innovations to **upgrade its energy infrastructure**, enhance renewable capacity, and decarbonize hard-to-abate sectors.

• Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) Mission

- India is developing a **National Mission on CCUS**, which aims to capture carbon dioxide emissions from industrial and power sectors and either utilize or store it underground.
- Under this mission, the government may introduce **financial incentives for industries** adopting CCUS, encouraging private sector participation and technology deployment.

• Legal and Policy Framework

- India's initiatives align with the **Energy Conservation Act, 2001**, which promotes energy efficiency and mandates energy audits.
- The **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** provides policy direction for mitigation efforts, including missions on solar energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable habitat.

• Strategic and Geopolitical Significance

- Collaboration with Norway enhances India's access to cutting-edge green technologies and strengthens diplomatic ties with Nordic countries.



- Reducing dependence on fossil fuels not only supports climate goals but also improves energy security and lowers import bills.

Definitions

- **Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS):** A set of technologies that capture carbon dioxide emissions from sources like power plants and industrial facilities, utilize it in various processes (e.g., enhanced oil recovery), or store it underground to prevent release into the atmosphere.
- **Net-zero emissions:** Balancing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted with the amount removed from the atmosphere, achieving overall climate neutrality.

Conclusion

India's partnership with Norway symbolizes a proactive approach to accelerate the energy transition and fulfill its net-zero pledge by 2070. The focus on CCUS and renewable technologies reflects India's strategy of technological collaboration, policy innovation, and sustainable industrial growth.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** International Relations — bilateral cooperation on climate and energy; global climate governance.
- **GS Paper 3:** Environment — mitigation strategies, clean energy technologies, CCUS, renewable energy policies.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** Responsibility towards environment, intergenerational equity, sustainable development.
- **Essay & Interview:** Topics on energy transition, climate change commitments, technology diplomacy.

6. India's Bioeconomy Target for 2030

- **Ambitious Growth Target for Bioeconomy**
 - India has reaffirmed its commitment to expand its **bioeconomy to \$300 billion by 2030**, from an estimated \$165.7 billion in 2024.
 - This reflects a strong policy push to use biological resources innovatively to drive sustainable economic growth and create green jobs.
- **Leveraging Biological Resources for Sustainability**
 - The bioeconomy involves utilizing **crops, forests, marine resources, and microorganisms** to produce food, bio-based chemicals, biofuels, bioenergy, and pharmaceuticals.



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- Promotes climate change mitigation by reducing dependence on fossil fuels and supporting circular economy principles.
- **Policy and Institutional Framework**
 - India's efforts align with the **National Biotechnology Development Strategy 2021–2025**, which emphasizes bio-manufacturing, bio-agriculture, and bioinformatics.
 - The **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** supports startups and research initiatives to accelerate innovation in bio-based sectors.
- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions**
 - **Article 48A** (Directive Principles of State Policy): The State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
 - Various laws such as the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**, and the **Environment Protection Act, 1986**, provide a legal framework for sustainable utilization of biological resources.
- **Potential Economic and Social Benefits**
 - Expansion of the bioeconomy can help in **doubling farmers' income**, creating rural employment, enhancing food and energy security, and reducing import dependence on petrochemicals.
 - Supports India's climate goals under the **Paris Agreement** and the push toward net-zero emissions by 2070.

Definitions

- **Bioeconomy:** Economic activities derived from the use of biological resources, processes, and principles to sustainably produce goods and services across sectors like agriculture, energy, health, and industry.
- **Circular economy:** An economic system aimed at minimizing waste and making the most of resources through reuse, recycling, and regeneration.

Conclusion

India's reaffirmation of its \$300 billion bioeconomy target demonstrates a clear vision for integrating sustainability with economic growth. By focusing on biotechnology, bio-based industries, and rural livelihoods, India can enhance its global competitiveness and contribute significantly to climate mitigation and environmental conservation.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** Government policies for health, agriculture, and rural development; environmental governance.
- **GS Paper 3:** Biotechnology, sustainable development, climate change mitigation strategies, economic growth models.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** Environmental ethics, intergenerational equity, social responsibility.



- **Essay & Interview:** Themes around green economy, bio-innovation, balancing growth and sustainability.

7. MSME Bill to Waive Minor Penalties

- **Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 and MSME Relief**

- The government plans to integrate certain provisions from the **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006** into the **Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0**, as announced in the FY26 Budget.
- The aim is to **waive or reduce minor penalties** imposed on MSMEs for non-disclosure of business information, providing much-needed compliance relief.



- **Focus on Decriminalization and Ease of Doing Business**

- Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 proposes **decriminalizing 100 laws**, following the success of Jan Vishwas Bill 1.0 (2023), which decriminalized nearly 180 provisions.
- By converting criminal penalties into civil penalties or removing them entirely, the bill aims to build a more business-friendly regulatory environment, particularly benefiting small enterprises.

- **Relief under Section 27 of MSMED Act**

- Section 27 currently imposes penalties of ₹1,000–₹10,000 on MSMEs for failing to submit required information to state or central authorities.
- Proposed amendments would **waive or simplify these minor penalties**, saving MSMEs valuable resources and reducing compliance costs.

- **Economic Significance of MSMEs**

- India's **65 million MSMEs** contribute approximately **30% to GDP** and **45% to exports**, and are a major source of employment.
- Reducing regulatory burden helps these enterprises reinvest resources into expansion, technology upgrades, and job creation.

- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions**

- Promoting MSMEs aligns with **Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 43)**, which encourages the State to promote cottage industries and small-scale industries.
- Also resonates with the vision of **'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'**, emphasizing simplified and transparent governance.



Definitions

- **MSME:** Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, classified based on investment and turnover criteria; they form the backbone of India's manufacturing and service sectors.
- **Decriminalization:** Process of converting criminal offenses into civil violations, generally involving monetary penalties instead of imprisonment or criminal record.

Conclusion

The inclusion of MSME-related penalty waivers in Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 represents a strategic step to promote ease of doing business and strengthen the MSME sector. By reducing legal and compliance hurdles, the government is empowering MSMEs to contribute more effectively to economic growth and job creation.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** Government policies for business environment, ease of doing business, regulatory reforms.
- **GS Paper 3:** Indian economy, MSME sector development, inclusive growth.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** Governance reforms, transparency, and responsiveness.
- **Essay & Interview:** Topics like empowering small businesses, reforms for inclusive economic growth, reducing regulatory burden.

8. Strengthening Telecom Infrastructure as Critical

- **Designation of Critical Telecom Infrastructure (CTI)**
 - India plans to notify **customer databases, routing systems, submarine cable equipment, and satellite management tools** as **Critical Telecom Infrastructure (CTI)** under the Telecom Act, 2023.
 - This move follows rising global cyberattacks (e.g., China's "Salt Typhoon" group hacking major US telcos) and aims to improve national cyber resilience.
- **Enhanced Disclosure and Security Requirements**
 - Once classified as CTI, telecom companies must **declare network architecture, vulnerabilities, risk assessments, cyber crisis management plans**, and periodic security audits.
 - Telcos are also required to maintain records on the origin of equipment and share this information with the government on demand.





- **Inclusion of Key Network Elements**
 - Elements like **Home Location Register (HLR)** (subscriber database for 2G, 3G, 4G), **Unified Data Management (UDM)** in 5G networks, and satellite Operations & Management Control (OMC) systems will be included under CTI.
 - Domain Name Servers (DNS) and their IP addresses are also covered, ensuring comprehensive cyber threat protection across all layers.
- **Legal and Institutional Framework**
 - The Telecom Act, 2023 introduces CTI but lacked specific definitions; this notification bridges that gap.
 - Establishment of a **Telecom Computer Security Incident Response Team (TCSIRT)** (analogous to CERT-In under MeitY) for telecom-specific cybersecurity incidents.
 - Plans to set up TCSIRT at National Communication Academy, Ghaziabad, with dedicated tools and personnel.
- **Importance of Cyber Sovereignty and Strategic Security**
 - Strengthening telecom infrastructure reduces dependency on foreign equipment and mitigates risks of espionage and sabotage.
 - Aligns with the national security objectives and global trends of securing critical information infrastructure (CII) as per the **Information Technology Act, 2000**, which empowers the government to declare any infrastructure as CII.

Definitions

- **Critical Telecom Infrastructure (CTI):** Essential telecom systems and assets vital for secure, reliable, and continuous communication services; any compromise can affect national security and economic stability.
- **Home Location Register (HLR):** Central database containing details of subscribers such as phone numbers, location, and service information in cellular networks.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 19(2):** Permits the state to impose reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech and expression in the interests of sovereignty, security, and public order — supporting stricter cyber and telecom regulations.
- **Information Technology Act, 2000:** Provides legal backing to secure critical information infrastructure and enforce cybersecurity norms.
- **Telecom Act, 2023:** Provides legislative framework to define and regulate CTI.

Conclusion

India's proactive step to formally classify and secure telecom infrastructure as critical reflects its strong commitment to cybersecurity and digital sovereignty. It addresses emerging threats, boosts public trust, and safeguards essential services critical to the economy and national security.



UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** Government policies, internal security challenges, cyber governance, regulatory reforms.
- **GS Paper 3:** Science & Technology — cybersecurity, critical infrastructure protection, data governance.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** Responsibility of private sector towards public safety, ethical dimensions of data privacy and security.
- **Essay & Interview:** Themes on digital sovereignty, protecting critical infrastructure, balancing security and privacy.

9. UPI AutoPay & New Consumer Tech Ecosystem

- **UPI AutoPay: Transforming Subscription Economy**
 - Launched in 2021 by the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, UPI AutoPay enables **automatic recurring payments** via e-mandates for services like OTT subscriptions, utility bills, and SIPs.
 - The volume of UPI AutoPay transactions from the top 10 remitter banks nearly doubled to **29.29 million in May 2025**, indicating rapid adoption.
- **Catalyst for AI and Consumer Tech Startups**
 - UPI AutoPay has created a strong foundation for **subscription-first business models**, supporting sectors like edtech, wellness, health tech, fintech, and entertainment.
 - Startups such as Kuku FM, Pocket FM, SpeakX, and HealthifyMe are leveraging this mechanism to expand reach and ensure predictable revenue streams.
- **Financial Inclusion and Digital Penetration**
 - Unlike traditional subscription models based on credit cards (low penetration in India), UPI AutoPay is **mobile-first, low-cost, and ideal for small-ticket services**, empowering a wider consumer base.
 - Helps tap into India's **900 million internet users** (projected for 2025), bridging gaps in digital and financial access.
- **Boost to Indian Fintech and Consumer AI Solutions**
 - UPI AutoPay reduces transaction friction, allowing companies to deliver **personalized, AI-powered content and services** affordably and at scale.
 - Encourages development of AI solutions in fields like language learning (SpeakX), mental health (Wysa), and content curation, strengthening India's AI ecosystem.





- **Legal and Policy Context**

- The UPI system is regulated under the **Payments and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**, empowering the RBI and NPCI to ensure secure, interoperable payment frameworks.
- Supports the constitutional goal under **Article 38** (Directive Principles) to secure a social order promoting welfare, including economic inclusivity and access to essential services.

Definitions

- **UPI AutoPay:** A feature under Unified Payments Interface (UPI) enabling users to automate recurring payments through electronic mandates.
- **E-mandate:** An electronic authorization given by a customer to allow auto-debits for specified services or transactions.

Conclusion

UPI AutoPay has emerged as a game-changing financial innovation, supporting India's rapid digital transformation and democratizing access to subscription-based services. By integrating seamless payment solutions, it empowers startups, strengthens the AI ecosystem, and enhances consumer convenience, contributing significantly to the digital economy.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** Governance, financial inclusion, e-governance initiatives.
- **GS Paper 3:** Indian economy — digital payments, fintech revolution, startup ecosystem, artificial intelligence applications.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** Promoting transparency, consumer empowerment, and public trust through simplified digital solutions.
- **Essay & Interview:** Themes on financial innovation, digital transformation, empowering the last mile through tech.

10. Lessons from China's State-led Development Model

- **China's Unique Development Path**
 - China retained a **socialist governance structure** while strategically using market-based (capitalist) tools to grow its economy.
 - Unlike India, which fully adopted the **Washington Consensus** (liberalization, privatization, globalization) post-1991, China kept state control over key sectors and guided market forces towards national welfare objectives.





- **Strategic Industrial and Economic Policy**
 - China prioritized domestic industrial development and high-tech manufacturing, resulting in its GDP and per capita income becoming nearly **five times that of India** today.
 - Policies emphasized **technology transfer, local capacity building, and strategic autonomy**, avoiding over-reliance on foreign capital and imports.
- **State as a Welfare Provider**
 - Historically, the Chinese state's legitimacy has been tied to its ability to ensure **maximum welfare for citizens**, a principle carried forward by the Communist Party.
 - Performance of local officials is assessed through **citizen satisfaction and community well-being**, not just economic output.
- **Integration of Social and Economic Goals**
 - China integrates **social equity, environmental sustainability, and citizen satisfaction** into its economic performance metrics (e.g., local GDP assessments include ecological and welfare factors).
 - Private firms are encouraged to align with social goals; large tech and property firms that diverge from this path have faced strict regulatory pushback.
- **Systems Thinking and Adaptive Governance**
 - Chinese policymakers are described as **systems thinkers**, seeing the economy as part of a broader social system.
 - Reforms are iterative and tailored locally; local governments have autonomy to innovate solutions suitable for their regions.

Definitions

- **Washington Consensus:** A set of economic policy prescriptions advocating free-market capitalism, trade liberalization, and minimal state intervention, widely promoted by Western institutions in the 1990s.
- **Systems Thinking:** A holistic approach that focuses on the interconnections within systems rather than on individual parts, used here to shape economic and social policies.

Constitutional and Legal Context for India

- **Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 38 & 39):**
 - Promote welfare of the people, reduce inequalities in income and status.
 - Ensure that the economic system does not result in concentration of wealth to the common detriment.
- **Fundamental Duty (Article 51A):**
 - Encourages citizens (and by extension, the state) to develop a spirit of common brotherhood and protect public property and resources.



Conclusion

China's model offers lessons on **balancing market efficiency with social welfare**, maintaining strategic autonomy, and using governance as a tool for equitable development. India should adapt these insights while respecting its democratic structure and diverse society. Rather than blindly following Western neoliberal models, India needs a **contextual, self-reliant approach** focused on inclusive growth and domestic capacity building.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** Comparative politics and governance, role of the state in development, welfare models.
- **GS Paper 3:** Economic planning, industrial policies, inclusive growth, self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat).
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** Ethical governance, prioritizing public welfare over profit.
- **Essay & Interview:** Themes on economic models, development strategies, lessons from global experiences.

II. Bonn Climate Talks and the Road to COP30

- **Delayed Progress and Deep Divides**
 - The Bonn conference, a preparatory meeting before COP30 in Brazil, faced **significant delays and disagreements**, especially over climate finance and trade measures.
 - Developing nations (G77 + China, including India) insisted on discussing **Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement**, which mandates developed countries to provide financial support. Developed nations resisted, highlighting deep-rooted North-South divides.
- **Contentious Climate Finance Debate**
 - Climate finance remained a **central unresolved issue**, with developing nations demanding predictable, adequate, and grant-based finance rather than loans.
 - Disagreements continued over burden-sharing frameworks, transparency in reporting (Article 9.5), and who should be responsible for mobilizing funds.
 - The proposal for a \$1.3 trillion annual climate finance target ("Baku to Belém" roadmap) lacked consensus on structure and sources.
- **Global Goal on Adaptation Challenges**
 - Countries discussed metrics to track adaptation progress but struggled to agree on including indicators related to **finance, technology transfer, and capacity building**.
 - India emphasized **context-specific, flexible indicators** rather than one-size-fits-all metrics to avoid overburdening developing nations.





- **Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) Dilemmas**
 - The MWP aimed at scaling efforts to keep warming below 1.5°C saw debates on whether it should remain a facilitative space or impose new commitments.
 - India and other developing countries stressed the need for support rather than punitive measures, aligning with the principle of **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)**.
- **Equity, Just Transition, and Gender Dimensions**
 - Discussions on the Just Transition Work Programme emphasized equity, development rights, labor rights, and stakeholder participation (especially of Indigenous communities).
 - A new Gender Action Plan was debated, highlighting unpaid care work, gender-based violence, and the importance of **gender-responsive budgeting**.
- **Technical Advances Amid Political Gridlocks**
 - Incremental progress was made on adaptation indicators, transparency frameworks, and Article 6 cooperative mechanisms.
 - However, entrenched differences on equity and financial commitments remain major hurdles ahead of COP30.

Definitions

- **Article 9.1 of Paris Agreement:** Obliges developed countries to provide financial resources to assist developing countries with mitigation and adaptation.
- **CBDR (Common but Differentiated Responsibilities):** Principle recognizing different capabilities and responsibilities among countries in addressing climate change.
- **Adaptation Fund:** A fund under UNFCCC to finance concrete adaptation projects in developing countries vulnerable to climate change.

Constitutional & Legal Context (India)

- **Article 21 (Right to Life):** Interpreted to include the right to a clean and healthy environment.
- **Article 48A (Directive Principles):** Directs the state to protect and improve the environment.
- **Article 51A(g) (Fundamental Duty):** Duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment.

Conclusion

The Bonn conference served as a **critical pressure test** revealing the continued gap between climate commitments and actual readiness to act. While technical work advanced slightly, the fundamental political divide over climate finance and historical responsibilities persists. As COP30 approaches, urgent consensus on equitable finance and implementation mechanisms is essential to meet global climate targets and support vulnerable nations.



UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** International relations, global groupings, and their effect on India's interests (e.g., UNFCCC negotiations).
- **GS Paper 3:** Environmental conservation, climate change agreements, adaptation and mitigation strategies, and funding mechanisms.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** Global ethical responsibility, climate justice, and intergenerational equity.
- **Essay & Interview:** Use of climate negotiations to illustrate global cooperation challenges and India's leadership role in climate justice.

12. National Overseas Scholarship (NOS) Funding Issues

- **Background of the NOS Scheme**
 - The National Overseas Scholarship (NOS) scheme is administered by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
 - It supports students from marginalized communities — including Scheduled Castes (SC), Denotified, Semi-Nomadic and Nomadic Tribes, landless agricultural laborers, and traditional artisans — to pursue postgraduate studies abroad in top universities.
- **Recent Developments and Fund Constraints**
 - For 2025–26, 106 students were selected against 125 available slots. However, only 40 candidates received provisional award letters immediately; the remaining 66 were kept “subject to availability of funds.”
 - This is the first time in at least three years that all slots could not be fully confirmed in the first round.
 - Applications also dropped to around 440, a low compared to recent years.
- **Funding and Allocation Issues**
 - Despite receiving ₹130 crore in the 2025–26 Budget Estimates — the highest in five years — the fund is insufficient as it must also cover ongoing support for students from previous batches.
 - The Ministry is seeking an additional allocation to address this shortfall and ensure that all selected candidates can be sent abroad.
- **Political and Parliamentary Concerns**
 - Opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, criticized the move, terming it discriminatory and urging immediate reversal.





- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment had earlier flagged inadequate scholarship amounts and suggested increasing slots in schemes like NOS.
- **Future of the Scheme**
 - The government is currently evaluating the NOS scheme as part of the upcoming 16th financial cycle (2026–27), to assess performance and decide on its continuation and improvements.

Key Definitions

- **National Overseas Scholarship (NOS):** A central sector scheme aimed at enabling marginalized community students to pursue higher studies abroad.
- **Denotified Tribes (DNTs):** Communities that were labeled as “criminal tribes” under British colonial laws but denotified post-independence.
- **Parliamentary Standing Committee:** A committee of MPs that scrutinizes functioning and performance of ministries, including policy implementation.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 46 (Directive Principles):** Directs the State to promote the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections and protect them from social injustice and exploitation.
- **Article 14 (Equality before law):** Ensures equal treatment and prohibits discrimination.
- **Article 15(4):** Empowers the State to make special provisions for advancement of socially and educationally backward classes or for SCs and STs.

Conclusion

The NOS scheme symbolizes India’s commitment to social justice and inclusive education. The recent fund crunch highlights the urgent need for consistent financial support to empower marginalized students globally. Addressing these funding gaps is crucial not only for individual empowerment but also for fulfilling constitutional obligations toward equity and social upliftment.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections, issues relating to development and management of social sector/services relating to education.
- **GS Paper 1 (Society):** Social empowerment, affirmative action policies.
- **Essay & Ethics:** Topics on social justice, inclusivity, and equitable growth.
- **Polity and Governance:** Understanding constitutional directives and parliamentary oversight mechanisms.