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FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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1. India Declines to Sign SCO Joint Statement Over Terrorism Language: Key Points

Key Highlights of the Issue

- **India Rejects SCO Joint Statement:**
At the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meet in China, India **refused to sign the joint communique** due to **insufficient reference to terrorism**, especially the **Pahalgam terrorist attack** that occurred on April 22.
- **Demand for Stronger Anti-Terror Language:**
Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** insisted on **explicit condemnation of terrorism**, naming the attack by *The Resistance Front (TRF)*, a **proxy of Lashkar-e-Taiba**, which targeted tourists based on their **religious identity**. 26 civilians, including a Nepali national, were killed.
- **Opposition to Pakistan and China's Influence:**
India opposed the **inclusion of references to Balochistan militancy** (a Pakistani concern), while the **Pahalgam attack** was **deliberately omitted**, allegedly due to **objections from China and Pakistan**. India saw this as **dilution of the anti-terrorism agenda**.



Constitutional & Legal Context

- **India's Zero Tolerance Policy on Terrorism:**
Rooted in **Article 51(c)** of the Constitution, which promotes **international peace and security**, India has consistently demanded strong **multilateral action** against terrorism.
- **Right to Self-Defence under International Law:**
India reiterated its **sovereign right to retaliate** under **Article 51 of the UN Charter**, as showcased in previous operations like the 2016 **surgical strikes** and the 2019 **Balakot air strike**.
- **UN and FATF Context:**
TRF is linked to **Lashkar-e-Taiba**, a UN-designated terrorist group. India's stance aligns with the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** guidelines on combating terror financing and safe havens.

Definitions & Related Concepts

- **The Resistance Front (TRF):** A **terror proxy outfit** backed by Pakistan, often used to bypass international scrutiny on banned groups like **LeT**.
- **Cross-Border Terrorism:** The use of **terrorist proxies across international borders**, particularly from **Pakistan into Jammu & Kashmir**, as an **instrument of state policy**.
- **Joint Statement in Multilateral Forums:** A formal declaration requiring **consensus among member states**; India's non-signature reflects **diplomatic dissent** and **strategic autonomy**.

Strategic and Diplomatic Implications

- **Operation Sindoor Launched:**
India initiated "**Operation Sindoor**" in May 2025 to **target cross-border terror infrastructure**, asserting a proactive stance in **counterterrorism strategy**.



- **Message to SCO and Global Community:**
India emphasized that **peace and development cannot coexist with terrorism**, calling out the **double standards** of some nations in **harboring and supporting terror groups**.
- **Diplomatic Outreach:**
On the sidelines, India engaged bilaterally with **Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Belarus**, indicating its continued engagement despite friction with China and Pakistan.

Conclusion

India's refusal to endorse the SCO joint statement marks a **principled stand** against the **selective treatment of terrorism** in multilateral forums. By demanding unequivocal condemnation of **terror attacks like Pahalgam**, India underlined its **zero tolerance** policy and the need for **consensus on global terrorism norms**. The move reflects both a **strategic assertion of national interest** and a **push for reform in global counter-terrorism discourse**, in line with India's growing role in **regional and international security architecture**.

2. Ax-4 Mission Success: Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla Becomes First Indian to Enter ISS

Key Highlights of the Ax-4 Mission

- **Historic First for India:**
Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla of the Indian Air Force became the **first Indian to enter the International Space Station (ISS)** as part of the **Axiom Mission-4 (Ax-4)**, launched aboard a **SpaceX Dragon capsule** on a **Falcon 9 rocket** from Florida. This marks a key milestone for **India's human spaceflight program**.
- **Connection to Gaganyaan Mission:**
Shukla is **one of four astronauts shortlisted for ISRO's Gaganyaan mission**, India's first indigenous crewed space mission scheduled no earlier than **2026**. He and backup crew member **Prasanth Nair** received joint training from **NASA and Russia**, building crucial global collaboration in space capability development.
- **India's Investment in Human Spaceflight:**
ISRO spent **₹500 crore** to secure Indian participation in the Ax-4 mission through **Axiom Space**, aiming to gain **real-time human spaceflight experience**, especially in **microgravity adaptation, mission operations, and scientific experiment protocols** on ISS.
- **Scientific and Strategic Relevance:**
The Ax-4 crew will **spend two weeks on ISS**, conducting **eight experiments sponsored by ISRO**. These include studies on **microgravity effects on human physiology, material science, and life support systems** — all critical for India's future long-duration missions.
- **Training and International Cooperation:**
Astronauts underwent extensive training in **NASA's Johnson Space Center (USA)** and **Roscosmos facilities (Russia)**. This reflects **India's reliance on global best practices** while building its own human spaceflight infrastructure.



Legal, Institutional & Constitutional Context

- **Article 51(c) of the Indian Constitution:**
Promotes **international cooperation in space research** and aligns with India's peaceful space ambitions.
- **Outer Space Treaty (1967):**
India is a signatory; the mission adheres to principles of **peaceful use of outer space, non-militarization, and international collaboration**.
- **Role of ISRO and IAF:**
ISRO is executing Gaganyaan under the **Human Spaceflight Centre (HSFC)**, while the Indian Air Force is the source of astronaut selection — showcasing the **civil-military fusion in strategic technology development**.



Key Definitions & Concepts

- **Microgravity:** A condition in which objects appear weightless due to free-fall orbiting of spacecraft. It impacts **blood circulation, bone density, and muscle mass**, requiring special astronaut training.
- **Gaganyaan Mission:** India's first manned spaceflight program led by ISRO, involving **sending three astronauts to Low Earth Orbit (LEO)** for 3–7 days.
- **Axiom Space:** A U.S.-based private space firm conducting **commercial missions to ISS** in collaboration with **NASA and SpaceX**. It provides critical learning platforms for nations developing human spaceflight programs.

Conclusion

The successful **docking of Ax-4** and Group Captain **Shubhanshu Shukla's entry into the ISS** marks a **historic moment in India's space journey**, especially in its ambition for indigenous human spaceflight. It strengthens India's **scientific capacity**, affirms **strategic global partnerships**, and significantly boosts the **Gaganyaan mission's preparedness**. For UPSC aspirants, this event illustrates the intersection of **science, diplomacy, national pride, and constitutional vision** in modern India's space program.

3. Induction of ICGS 'Adamyā': A Strategic Boost to India's Maritime Security

Key Highlights of the Induction

- **First of Eight Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs):**
The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on **June 26, 2025**, inducted '**Adamyā**', the **first FPV** of a series of eight being built by **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)**. It is a **fully indigenously designed and constructed** high-speed vessel aimed at enhancing maritime operations.
- **Technological Advancement & Indigenous Innovation:**
'Adamyā' is the **first FPV in ICG's fleet** to incorporate **Controllable Pitch Propellers (CPPs)** and **indigenously developed gearboxes**, ensuring **superior maneuverability, fuel efficiency, and better sea-handling capabilities** in India's coastal waters.



- **State-of-the-Art Combat and Surveillance Features:**
Equipped with a **30mm CRN-91 naval gun**, two **12.7mm stabilized remote-control guns**, and advanced systems like **Integrated Bridge System (IBS)**, **Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS)**, and **Automated Power Management System (APMS)** — ‘Adamyia’ significantly boosts ICG’s **surveillance, firepower, and mission-readiness**.

Strategic Importance for India

- **Maritime Security and EEZ Protection:**
The FPVs will serve as **force multipliers** for operations such as **coastal surveillance, search and rescue (SAR), anti-smuggling, and law enforcement** within India’s **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**, enhancing **maritime domain awareness**.
- **Aatmanirbhar Bharat in Defence Manufacturing:**
The project aligns with India’s **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** (Self-Reliant India) initiative, promoting **indigenization in shipbuilding**, reducing dependency on foreign technologies, and showcasing **domestic defense manufacturing capabilities**.



Constitutional & Legal Framework

- **Article 51(c) – Promotion of International Peace and Security:**
Through enhanced coastal security, India strengthens its **international maritime obligations**, including **anti-piracy and humanitarian missions**.
- **Coast Guard Act, 1978:**
Defines the statutory role of the **Indian Coast Guard** in ensuring **safety, protection of the maritime environment**, and enforcement of **maritime law** in the EEZ.
- **UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea):**
As a signatory, India is responsible for the **protection of its EEZ** up to 200 nautical miles — a domain where FPVs like ‘Adamyia’ play a vital role.

Important Definitions

- **Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV):**
A class of **high-speed, agile naval ships** designed for **coastal patrolling, interdiction, and quick response** during maritime incidents.
- **Controllable Pitch Propellers (CPPs):**
A marine propulsion system where the **angle of the propeller blades can be changed while rotating**, allowing better speed control, direction changes, and fuel efficiency.
- **Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS):**
A ship automation system that **monitors and controls machinery and auxiliary systems**, ensuring enhanced **operational safety and efficiency**.



Conclusion

The induction of ICGS 'Adamyā' marks a **technological leap and strategic strengthening** of India's **coastal defense architecture**. With its indigenously developed systems and combat-readiness, it exemplifies the spirit of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and contributes significantly to India's commitment toward **maritime security, economic zone protection, and regional stability**. For UPSC aspirants, this reflects the convergence of **national security, technological innovation, and policy self-reliance** in India's evolving maritime doctrine.

4. MoHUA Launches 'Safai Apnao, BimaariBhagao' (SABB) Campaign 2025

Monsoon-Centric Urban Sanitation Campaign

- **Mega Swachhata Initiative by MoHUA:**
The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), under **Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban (SBM-U)**, launched the '**Safai Apnao, BimaariBhagao**' (SABB) campaign from **1st–31st July 2025** to combat increased sanitation challenges during the **monsoon season**, particularly focusing on **clogged drains, garbage hotspots, and water-borne/vector-borne diseases**.
- **Health-Focused Swachhata Drive:**
The campaign aims to prevent diseases like **Dengue, Malaria, and Chikungunya** by ensuring **drain cleaning, waste management, and awareness drives** in vulnerable areas like **slums, schools, and high-footfall zones**. It emphasizes **handwashing, public toilet cleanliness, and clean drinking water**, especially for children and SafaiMitras.
- **6 Key Swachhata Mantras for Citizens:**
Citizens are urged to follow six hygiene mantras:

(1) Clean Hands



(2) Clean Homes

(3) Clean Neighbourhoods

(4) Clean Toilets

(5) Clean Drains & Water Bodies

(6) Clean Public Spaces



Participation is encouraged via reporting issues through the **Swachhata App** and active involvement in community cleanliness.

Institutional and Technological Support

- **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) as Frontline Agents:**
ULBs are directed to conduct **surveillance in high-risk areas**, ensure **regular waste collection**, maintain **drains and public toilets**, and coordinate across departments. All activities must be recorded on the **Swachhatam Portal** for accountability.
- **Smart Cities & SPVs Mobilized:**
Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) in **100 Smart Cities** will activate **Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)** to conduct **targeted cleaning** of food streets, public markets, and heritage sites using innovative tools and data analytics.
- **Multi-Ministerial Coordination:**
The campaign is aligned with the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)**, **Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation (DDWS)**, **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**, **Ministry of Women & Child Development (MoWCD)**, and **Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL)** to ensure **converged action on public health and sanitation**.

Constitutional & Legal Framework

- **Article 47 – Directive Principle of State Policy:**
Imposes a duty on the State to **raise the level of nutrition and public health**, making this campaign a constitutional responsibility in ensuring **preventive sanitation**.
- **Article 21 – Right to Life:**
Judicial interpretation includes **right to clean environment and public health** within the ambit of right to life. Campaigns like SABB enhance **citizen welfare through proactive public service delivery**.
- **The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 & Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016:**
Legal backing for proper waste disposal, pollution prevention, and urban sanitation compliance.

Definitions

- **Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban (SBM-U):**
A flagship programme launched in 2014 to **eliminate open defecation**, improve **municipal solid waste management**, and promote **clean urban environments**.
- **Vector-Borne Diseases:**
Illnesses caused by pathogens transmitted by vectors such as **mosquitoes**, including **malaria, dengue, and chikungunya**—common during monsoon due to water stagnation.
- **ULBs (Urban Local Bodies):**
Constitutionally recognized under the **74th Constitutional Amendment Act**, ULBs are responsible for **urban sanitation, solid waste management, and public health services**.

Conclusion

The **SABB Campaign 2025** demonstrates India's proactive, **health-oriented approach to urban sanitation**, especially during vulnerable monsoon months. It strengthens the **Swachh Bharat Mission's**



behavioral focus, fosters **community-led action**, and integrates **technology and inter-ministerial cooperation** for public health protection.

5. 28th National Good Governance Webinar – Promoting District-Level Excellence

National Webinar on Holistic Development of Districts

- **Prime Minister-Directed Initiative on Governance Replication:**
The **28th National Good Governance Webinar** was held on **26th June 2025**, under the theme **‘Holistic Development of Districts’**, as part of the **National Good Governance Webinar Series (2025–26)**. It is organized by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** on the PM’s directive to disseminate award-winning administrative innovations for wider replication across India.
- **Presentations by PM’s Award-Winning Districts:**
The webinar featured presentations from:
 - **Kupwara District, Jammu & Kashmir** by **DM Ayushi Sudan**
 - **Tinsukia District, Assam** by **DC Swapneel Paul**Both districts were recipients of the **2024 PM’s Awards for Excellence in Public Administration**, focusing on **holistic and inclusive district development models**.
- **Wide Participation and Institutional Outreach:**
The session saw participation from over **850 locations nationwide**, including **State and District Officers, District Collectors, Administrative Training Institutes, and Line Departments**, reflecting the **scale and inclusivity of administrative learning** at all levels of governance.

Definitions and Governance Concepts

- **Holistic Development of Districts:**
An approach that emphasizes **integrated progress across sectors** – including **health, education, livelihoods, digital governance, infrastructure, and inclusivity** – to ensure balanced regional development.
- **PM’s Award for Excellence in Public Administration:**
A prestigious national award recognizing **innovative and impactful governance models** by civil servants, encouraging **replication and scalability** of best practices.



- **Good Governance:**

Defined by the principles of **transparency, accountability, participatory decision-making, equity, and efficiency** – all of which are central to these district-level initiatives.

Constitutional & Legal Relevance

- **Article 38(2) – Directive Principles of State Policy:**

Calls upon the State to **reduce inequalities in**



income, status, facilities, and opportunities, which aligns with the goal of **district-level holistic development**.

- **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments:**
Promote **decentralization** and empower **local governance institutions** to ensure district-specific planning, citizen engagement, and effective last-mile service delivery.
- **Digital Governance under National e-Governance Plan (NeGP):**
The dissemination of best practices using digital platforms reinforces the **use of ICT in governance**, enhancing transparency and decision-making efficiency.

Strategic and Administrative Importance

- **Peer Learning and Replication Model:**
The webinar model fosters a **bottom-up governance improvement** mechanism by promoting **inter-district learning**, encouraging **customized adoption** of proven strategies.
- **Focus on Sustainability and Expansion:**
Each presentation includes an assessment of **institutionalisation, scalability, and sustainability**, enabling systemic integration of successful models into **long-term governance frameworks**.
- **Civil Services Capacity Building:**
These webinars function as part of a **non-formal training mechanism** complementing the **Mission Karmayogi**, promoting **continuous learning for public servants**.

Conclusion

The **28th National Good Governance Webinar** reflects a **new paradigm in administrative learning and innovation dissemination**. By showcasing **district-level success stories**, it institutionalizes a **culture of knowledge sharing, transparency, and participatory governance**. The initiative supports India's long-term goal of achieving **equity-driven, inclusive, and technology-enabled development** across its districts — a vision that aligns with the **constitutional mandate for social justice and good governance**. For UPSC aspirants, it is a key example of how **policy meets practice** in modern Indian administration.

6. SSC Launches E-Dossier System: A Major Step Towards Digital Governance

Key Highlights of the Initiative

- **Transition from Physical to Electronic Dossiers (E-Dossiers):**
The **Staff Selection Commission (SSC)** has implemented a **digital e-dossier portal** for forwarding recruitment documents of selected candidates to **Ministries and Departments**, eliminating the need for physical files and enabling **end-to-end digitization** of recruitment formalities.

- **Objective: Speed, Security & Transparency:**
E-dossiers ensure **faster communication, greater data integrity**, and **secure access** for nodal





officers using **login-based credentials**. The system reduces risks of **document tampering, loss, or unauthorized changes**, ensuring **authenticity and traceability**.

- **Widespread Implementation:**

The digital dossier system has been rolled out for all major SSC exams, including:

□ **Junior Engineer Exam 2024**

□ **Combined Higher Secondary Level (CHSL) Exam 2024**

□ **Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) Exam 2024**

□ **Combined Graduate Level (CGL) Exam 2024**

This marks a critical transformation in **mass-scale central recruitment processes**.

Benefits and Broader Significance

- **Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability:**

Eliminating physical paperwork results in **cost savings** and aligns with **India's sustainability goals** under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)**.

- **Youth-Centric Reform:**

The digital shift significantly reduces the time taken in **pre-appointment formalities**, thereby **benefiting lakhs of aspirants** by **expediting employment processes**.

- **Digital India in Action:**

The move is aligned with the **Digital India Mission**, promoting **e-Governance, paperless administration**, and **citizen-centric service delivery**.

Constitutional & Legal Relevance

- **Article 16 – Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment:**

By streamlining recruitment and reducing delays, the reform ensures **greater accessibility and fairness** in government employment processes.

- **Right to Timely Delivery of Services (Administrative Reforms):**

Though not explicitly constitutional, this reform is aligned with the **citizen charter** principles and **service delivery mandates** outlined in **Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) recommendations**.

- **Information Technology Act, 2000:**

The digital portal adheres to **legal standards for digital data security**, including **electronic authentication, access control, and data traceability**.

Key Definitions

- **E-Dossier:**

A **digitally compiled and verified set of documents** related to a selected candidate's recruitment, including certificates, ID proofs, and verification forms — accessible only to designated authorities.

- **Nodal Officer:**

An officially designated person in a Ministry/Department responsible for **receiving, processing, and initiating formalities** based on SSC recruitment dossiers.

- **Digital India Mission:**

A flagship initiative launched in 2015 aimed at transforming India into a **digitally empowered**



society and knowledge economy, through e-Governance, digital infrastructure, and digital literacy.

Conclusion

The e-dossier system by SSC marks a landmark shift in **digital recruitment administration**, promoting **transparency, speed, and accountability** in public sector employment. It is a fine example of how **e-Governance tools can streamline bureaucratic processes**, ensuring better outcomes for both **government institutions and citizens**, especially **youth aspirants**.

7. Foundation of Green Data Centre at CEL, Ghaziabad – Driving Digital, Defence, and Sustainable Innovation

Strategic Launch of State-of-the-Art Green Data Centre

- **Major Digital Infrastructure Initiative in Uttar Pradesh:**
On 26th June 2025, the foundation stone of a **Green Data Centre** with **30 MW capacity** was laid at **Central Electronics Limited (CEL), Ghaziabad** by **CM Yogi Adityanath** and **Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh**. With an investment of ₹1,000 crore, it is a joint venture between **CEL (a PSU under CSIR)** and **ESDS**, aligned with **Digital India** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat** visions.
- **Key Features and Green Design:**
The centre will meet **Tier III/TIA/Uptime-compliant standards**, support **200 high-density racks per floor**, and offer **40 Gbps network with dual 10 Gbps cloud links**. It integrates **rainwater harvesting, reflective roofing, smart cooling, and energy-efficient technologies**, showcasing **sustainability-driven digital growth**.



Revival and Role of CEL in Strategic Sectors

- **From Financial Crisis to Miniratna Status:**
CEL, established in **1974**, introduced India's **first solar cell in 1977**. Once facing disinvestment, it revived through a **successful Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** model and was conferred **Mini Ratna status** in 2024, marking a case of strategic PSU turnaround.
- **Multisectoral Contributions:**
CEL's innovations have advanced **solar PV deployment**, especially in tribal and remote areas, contributed to **railway safety, digital literacy, and strategic defence**. It developed **radars for the Akash Missile System**, which proved crucial during **Operation Sindhoor**, underscoring its defence significance.

Boost to S&T and Innovation Ecosystem in Uttar Pradesh

- **New Biotechnology Industrial Park & Startup Conclave:**
Dr. Singh announced the setting up of a **Biotech Industrial Park in Lucknow** and a **Startup Conclave post-Independence Day**, promoting **entrepreneurship and innovation** in UP, boosting the state's transformation into an **S&T and innovation hub**.



- **Celebrating India's Scientific Milestones:**
Key achievements such as **CSIR's 108-petal lotus**, **out-of-season tulips**, **Surya Tilak on Lord Ram's idol**, and **faecal sludge treatment during Kumbh Mela** were highlighted as symbols of India's growing **science-backed cultural innovation** and **precision engineering**.

Constitutional & Legal Relevance

- **Article 48A – Environmental Protection:**
The establishment of a **Green Data Centre** aligns with India's **constitutional duty** to **protect and improve the environment** by integrating **eco-friendly practices**.
- **Article 51A(h) – Promotion of Scientific Temper:**
The project encourages **scientific innovation**, **technological excellence**, and **entrepreneurship**, promoting the spirit of **scientific inquiry and reform** among citizens.
- **Information Technology Act, 2000:**
The digital infrastructure, including data security, privacy, and network standards of the centre, is governed by provisions under this Act.

Key Definitions

- **Green Data Centre:**
A facility designed with **minimal environmental impact**, using **renewable energy**, **energy-efficient cooling systems**, and **eco-friendly operations**, reducing **carbon footprint**.
- **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):**
A **collaborative funding and implementation model** between government and private sector entities, used for infrastructure development, often ensuring **risk sharing** and **operational efficiency**.
- **Miniratna PSU:**
A status conferred on certain profitable PSUs, allowing them **enhanced financial autonomy** to make investment decisions up to a prescribed limit.

Conclusion

The launch of the **Green Data Centre at CEL Ghaziabad** represents a **convergence of sustainable infrastructure, digital empowerment, PSU revitalization, and defence innovation**. It reflects **India's transition toward a data-driven, environmentally conscious, and self-reliant economy**, while promoting **strategic decentralization** of digital infrastructure.

8. India's First Maritime NBFC – Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL)

SMFCL: A New Era in Maritime Financing

- **Inauguration of India's First Maritime NBFC:**
On **26th June 2025**, Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** inaugurated the **Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL)**, India's first **sector-specific Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** dedicated to the maritime sector. Registered with the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** on **19th**



June 2025, SMFCL is a **Mini Ratna, Category-I CPSE** and a successor to **Sagarmala Development Company Limited**.

- **Objective – Bridging Financial Gaps in Maritime Sector:**
SMFCL aims to **provide tailored financial solutions** for stakeholders in India's maritime ecosystem. These include **port authorities, shipping companies, MSMEs, startups, and maritime training institutes**. It will offer **short-, medium-, and long-term financial products**, addressing a major structural gap in port and maritime infrastructure financing.

Role in Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047

- **Alignment with Amrit Kaal Vision & Viksit Bharat 2047:**
SMFCL supports the **Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**, which aspires to position India as a **global maritime leader**. It complements national goals of **logistics efficiency, blue economy development, and coastal infrastructure modernization**, key pillars under **PM Gati Shakti** and **Sagarmala Programme**.



- **Support for Strategic and Emerging Sectors:**
SMFCL will also finance **shipbuilding, cruise tourism, renewable energy, maritime education, and green port development**—sectors crucial to **climate-resilient maritime infrastructure and economic diversification** under the blue economy framework.

Key Concepts & Definitions

- **NBFC (Non-Banking Financial Company):**
A financial institution registered with the **RBI** that provides banking-like services such as loans and investments but **does not hold a banking license** or accept demand deposits.
- **Mini Ratna CPSE (Category-I):**
A classification of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) with financial autonomy based on consistent profit-making track record, allowing independent investment decisions up to a certain threshold.
- **Blue Economy:**
The **sustainable use of ocean resources** for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and ocean ecosystem health. It includes activities such as **fisheries, marine transport, renewable ocean energy, and tourism**.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 297 – Union's Control over Maritime Resources:**
Empowers the Union Government over lands, minerals, and resources in territorial waters and continental shelf—enabling it to lead initiatives like Sagarmala and SMFCL.
- **Entry 30, List I (Union List) – Shipping and Navigation:**
Places **maritime infrastructure** under the exclusive legislative and administrative jurisdiction of the Union Government, justifying MoPSW's role.
- **RBI Act, 1934 & Companies Act, 2013:**
Governs **registration and regulation of NBFCs**, ensuring **financial prudence, oversight, and legal compliance** of entities like SMFCL.



Strategic Significance

- **Boost to Coastal Employment and Innovation:**
By financing startups and MSMEs, SMFCL will promote **coastal entrepreneurship, employment generation, and maritime R&D**, contributing to **inclusive regional growth**.
- **Fills a Critical Institutional Void:**
India previously lacked a **dedicated financial institution** for maritime project lending. SMFCL bridges this gap, ensuring **faster project execution and investment flow** in this capital-intensive sector.
- **Supports Sustainable and Green Infrastructure:**
With a focus on **eco-friendly port development, clean energy integration, and maritime tourism**, SMFCL supports India's **Net Zero Emission** targets and **climate commitments**.

Conclusion

The launch of **Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited** marks a **pivotal step in maritime sector reform and financial innovation**. It not only fills a long-pending gap in **sector-specific financing**, but also reinforces India's ambition to emerge as a **global maritime power** by 2047.

9. Israel–Iran Ceasefire: Managing the Blowback

Background: Ceasefire in a Complex Conflict

- **Conflict Timeline and Ceasefire:**
The Israel–Iran confrontation, rooted in the aftermath of Hamas' *Operation Toofan al-Aqsa* (October 2023), has seen **21 months of intense hostilities** involving not just Israel and Iran, but also Hezbollah (Lebanon), Houthis (Yemen), and the Assad regime (Syria). The **ceasefire announced by U.S. President Donald Trump** aims to end the military escalations, though risks of blowback and regional instability persist.
- **Military Outcomes:**
The **Israel Defense Forces (IDF)** claimed tactical victories — **crippling Hamas, neutralizing Hezbollah, and disabling Iran's missile and nuclear capabilities**. However, these were **pyrrhic victories**, with **civilian casualties, regional destabilization, and continued hostage crises** in Gaza. The U.S. and Israel also targeted Iranian military infrastructure, leading to **strategic losses** for Tehran.

Strategic Risks and Challenges Ahead

- **Managing the Iran Question:**
Iran remains the **most populous and politically potent actor** in West Asia. Despite economic sanctions and warfare, it retains **geo-strategic importance**. Attempts to **impose regime change** could backfire. Historical precedents from **Afghanistan and Iraq** show that **external military intervention often leads to prolonged anarchy**.





- **Internal Dynamics of Iran:**

Iran's power structure is dominated by **hardliners and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)**. Succession to **Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei (aged 86)** is uncertain. Possible successors include **Mojtaba Khamenei (his son)** and **Hassan Khomeini (grandson of the Islamic Republic's founder)**. A **moderate transition** could reshape Iran's role, but **radical resistance remains strong**.

Constitutional Context (Iran & Global Governance)

- **Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution (1979):**

Vests immense power in the **Supreme Leader**, who controls judiciary, military, and media. The **Guardian Council** filters electoral candidacy, often eliminating reformists.

- **International Legal Instruments:**

- **UN Charter (Art. 2)** prohibits threat/use of force against sovereign states.
- **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** binds Iran on nuclear issues; **IAEA** supervises compliance.
- **Rome Statute (ICC)** – Israel faces criticism but is not a party; ICC inquiries are symbolic.

Implications for Regional Stability

- **Pax Americana vs. Multipolar Resistance:**

The U.S. seeks a **pro-West Tehran** to consolidate **maritime and hydrocarbon control** in West Asia. A friendly Iran could **reduce regional proxy conflicts** and enable **American corporations** to tap into **Iran's untapped markets**.

- **Gaza and Palestine Question:**

The war has aggravated **humanitarian conditions in Gaza**, with **mass starvation and rising civilian casualties**. Meanwhile, the **Palestinian Authority** faces leadership crisis, and **Israeli settlements in the West Bank** continue unchecked. A resolution here remains elusive despite Israel's military focus shifting back from Iran.

Definitions and Key Terms

- **Pyrrhic Victory:** A win that comes at such a significant cost that it is tantamount to defeat.
- **Proxy Warfare:** Conflict instigated by major powers using non-state actors or allied countries.
- **Blowback:** Unintended negative consequences of a country's foreign policy actions.
- **WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction):** Weapons capable of large-scale destruction — nuclear, biological, chemical.

Conclusion

The **Israel–Iran ceasefire**, while offering **short-term relief**, opens up **long-term geopolitical uncertainties**. The **path to stability** lies not in **triumphalism**, but in **measured diplomacy, post-war reconstruction**, and **inclusive governance**. If Israel, Iran, and the U.S. avoid **hardline posturing** and pursue **regional integration, humanitarian justice**, and **nation-building**, the Middle East could finally emerge from its **cycle of violent interregnums**. Otherwise, the region risks returning to the **default of tension, radicalization, and economic disruption**, undermining global peace and oil security.



10. Fathoming America's Plan to Manage AI Proliferation

Key Highlights of the Issue

- **AI Diffusion Framework Rescinded:**

The **AI Diffusion Framework**, introduced by the **Biden administration**, aimed to impose **export controls on AI chips and model weights**, akin to **nuclear non-proliferation regimes**.

It barred countries like **China and Russia** from accessing advanced AI, while favoring U.S. allies. However, it was **withdrawn by the Trump administration** due to its **strategic and diplomatic counterproductivity**.



- **Flaws in the Framework:**

The Framework treated **AI (a civilian-origin technology)** as a **military-grade export**. It created a **global trust deficit**, undermined cooperation, and prompted both adversaries and allies to seek **technological sovereignty**. It also unintentionally incentivized nations like **China to innovate with less compute power**, undermining U.S. export controls.

Shift in Strategy – Technological Enforcement

- **From Trade Controls to Hardware Controls:**

The U.S. now appears to shift toward **technological enforcement**, such as embedding **location tracking, hardware-level restrictions, and usage monitoring** within AI chips. Legislation is underway to make **on-chip control features** mandatory to prevent unauthorized diversion to blacklisted nations like **China and Russia**.

- **Expansion of Export Controls:**

In **March 2025**, the U.S. expanded its **Entity List (blacklist)** and tightened enforcement mechanisms, signaling **continued efforts to restrict Chinese access to advanced AI chips**, even without a formal AI framework.

Concerns for Strategic Autonomy and Privacy

- **Global Trust and Autonomy Erosion:**

These controls raise **new privacy, surveillance, and ownership concerns**, especially for **legitimate users**. Countries fear loss of **strategic autonomy** and will likely pursue **non-U.S. alternatives** to avoid surveillance and hardware dependency, eroding U.S. AI leadership.

- **India's Position:**

India, which was **not favorably placed** under the earlier Framework, may benefit from the reversal. However, **India must remain cautious**, as **alternative control mechanisms** could still restrict AI-related collaboration or technology access.

Key Concepts & Legal Context

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. In this context, AI includes **large language models, autonomous systems, and deep learning algorithms**.



- **Export Controls:** Regulatory measures that **restrict the export of sensitive technologies**, traditionally used for **military goods**, now being extended to **dual-use technologies** like AI.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** The ability of a country to **make its own technological, economic, and military decisions** without dependence on another nation or bloc.
- **Non-Proliferation Treaty Analogy:** The AI Framework was likened to **nuclear non-proliferation**, though **AI is inherently civilian**, making such treatment **misguided** and **disruptive to innovation**.

Conclusion

The **revocation of the AI Diffusion Framework** marks a **tactical shift**, not a change in America's strategic goal of **maintaining dominance in AI technology**. The U.S. continues to pursue **restrictive measures**, now

through **technological means**, rather than diplomatic export bans. These could replicate the **same pitfalls**, such as **loss of global trust**, **privacy concerns**, and **strategic hedging by allies**.

For India and other nations, this situation underscores the need to build **indigenous AI capabilities**, safeguard **technological autonomy**, and push for **globally accepted norms on AI governance** — a matter that is bound to play a pivotal role in **India's foreign policy and digital sovereignty agenda** in the years ahead.

11. Is Voter Registration Being Subject to Fraud?

Allegations of Electoral Roll Manipulation

- **Statistical Anomalies in Maharashtra Elections:**
Opposition parties, especially Congress, have flagged an **unprecedented increase of over 40 lakh voters** in Maharashtra's 2024 Assembly elections within just **five months after the Lok Sabha elections**. In contrast, only 32 lakh voters were added in the preceding five years. This surge is seen as a **statistical outlier**, questioning the integrity of voter registration processes.

Election Commission's Position and Reforms

- **ECI's Rebuttal and Special Revision Plans:**
The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** maintains that **tampering with electoral rolls is nearly impossible** and has pointed to mechanisms like appeals and Aadhaar seeding. However, it has announced **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** in Bihar to ensure accuracy and transparency ahead of elections—a **tacit admission that problems exist** in voter roll integrity.

Core Issues Raised

- **Lack of Transparency & Digital Access:**
Experts argue for **machine-readable formats** of voter rolls to enable better verification. Concerns also exist about **surge in voting post 5 p.m.**, which the Opposition claims warrants **CCTV footage release** to dispel doubts over alleged irregularities.



- **Role of Aadhaar and Verification Loopholes:**

While **Aadhaar seeding** is seen as a step towards cleaning databases, it raises **privacy and exclusion risks**, particularly **wrongful deletions** of genuine voters. Aadhaar is not mandatory for voter ID as per Supreme Court's judgment in *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2018).



Constitutional & Legal Framework

- **Article 324 of the Constitution:**
Empowers the **ECI** with the superintendence, direction, and control of elections to Parliament and State Legislatures.
- **Representation of the People Act, 1950:**
Governs the **preparation of electoral rolls**, qualifications of voters, and the procedure for additions/deletions.
- **Voter Verification Mechanisms:**
Political parties can raise objections or file appeals regarding additions/deletions during **public display periods** under Rule 21A of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

Competing Views

- **Praveen Chakravarty (Data Scientist):**
Highlights **illogical voter trends**, demands **digital transparency**, and emphasizes the **constitutional duty** of ECI beyond reliance on political parties for verification.
- **Rangarajan R. (Former Bureaucrat):**
Acknowledges possible anomalies but warns against assuming widespread manipulation; stresses **inclusive, transparent verification** involving both ECI and political parties.

Conclusion

The controversy over voter registration irregularities underlines the need for **robust and transparent electoral processes**. While the ECI is constitutionally empowered to ensure **free and fair elections**, it must proactively address doubts to maintain **public trust**. Simultaneously, political parties must strengthen their **booth-level mechanisms** and engage constructively in the process.

Going forward, **digitization of voter rolls**, **CCTV transparency**, and **inclusive verification** involving civil society, political parties, and ECI are essential to safeguard **electoral integrity**, a cornerstone of Indian democracy.