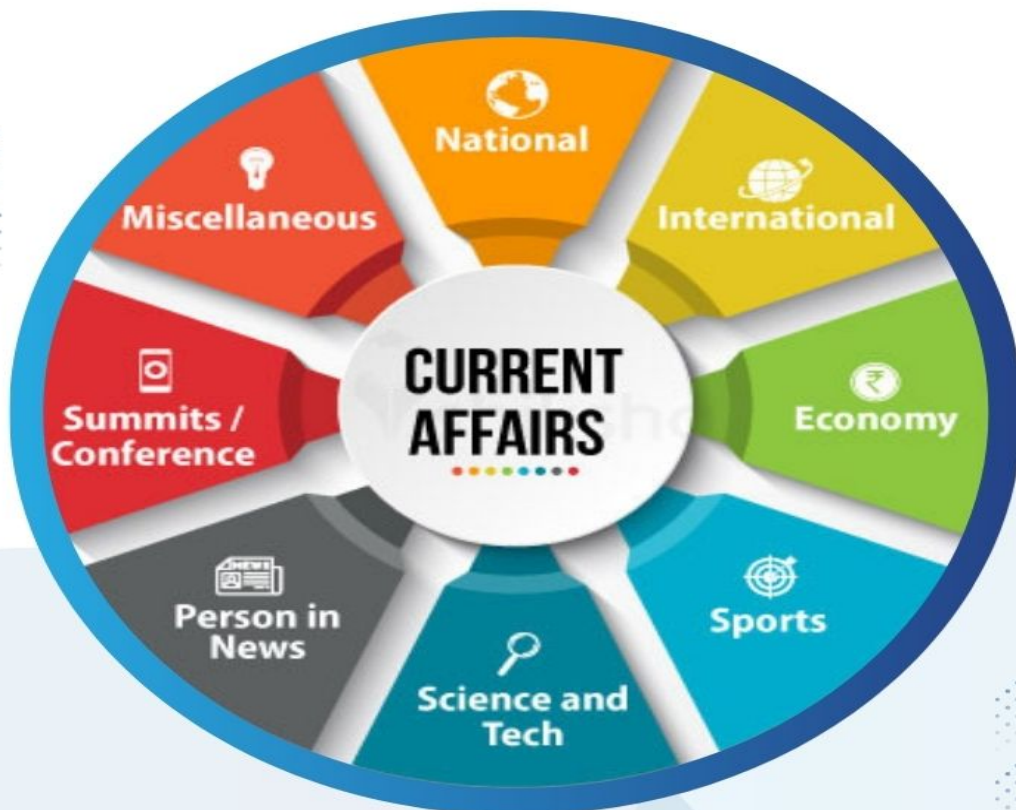"We help you reach for the star"

VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY
& STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 22/07/2025 (TUESDAY)

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1. India's Diverging Clean Mobility Policies: EV vs Hybrid Vehicle Incentives

Key Highlights for UPSC Civil Services Exam

1. **Policy Divergence between Centre and States**

   o The **Central Government** supports **incentives for both EVs (Electric Vehicles) and hybrids** under schemes like **FAME-II** and **PM E-Drive**.

   o However, several **states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh** are providing **incentives only for Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs)**.

   o States like **Chhattisgarh** have **withdrawn incentives for hybrids**, amending their earlier EV policies.

2. **Tug of War Between EV and Hybrid Lobbies**

   o **Tata Motors and Mahindra** lead the **EV lobby**, advocating incentives solely for **zero tailpipe emission vehicles**.

   o **Maruti Suzuki**, leading the **hybrid lobby**, argues for strong hybrid incentives, citing **fuel efficiency improvements (35–44%)** and **CO_2 emission reductions (26–32%)**.

   o Maruti claims that **97% of vehicles are still non-EV**, and **hybrids can serve as a transition** to full electrification.

3. **Low Hybrid Incentivization Across States**

   o By end of 2024, only **Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Chandigarh, and Chhattisgarh** had policies incentivizing hybrids.

   o With Chhattisgarh's recent withdrawal, only **4 regions remain**.

   o **Delhi and Uttarakhand** have draft provisions for hybrid incentives, but final implementation is pending.

4. **Centre's Legislative and Policy Framework**

   o **FAME-II Scheme (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles)**: Provides incentives for **both EVs and hybrids**.

   o **PM E-Drive Scheme**: Includes support for **plug-in and strong hybrid electric ambulances**.

   o **No central legal prohibition** on hybrid incentives, but **states exercise discretion** in their implementation.

5. **Debate Over Long-Term Sustainability Goals**

   o EV proponents argue that **incentives should bridge the viability gap** for **emerging, zero-emission technologies**.

   o Hybrid proponents emphasize **immediate reduction in fossil fuel dependency and pollution**, pushing for hybrid inclusion in the clean mobility transition.

6. **Constitutional and Governance Aspects**

   o **Electric Mobility falls under the Concurrent List**: Both **Centre and States** can legislate or create policies.

   o Leads to **federal tensions and fragmented implementation**, impacting uniformity of India's transition to clean mobility.

Key Definitions for UPSC

- **Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV):** A vehicle that runs entirely on electric power using a battery and electric motor.

- **Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV):** Combines a conventional internal combustion engine (ICE) with an electric propulsion system for improved fuel economy.

- **Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV):** A hybrid vehicle with a larger battery that can be recharged by plugging into an external power source.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

India's clean mobility push is currently at a **policy crossroads**. While the **Centre maintains a technology-neutral approach**, **states are increasingly preferring BEVs** over hybrids in their incentive frameworks. This divergence highlights a **broader issue of policy coherence in a federal setup**, especially when **national goals like decarbonization and energy security** are at stake.

For UPSC aspirants, this issue is significant under:

- **GS Paper 2 (Governance and Cooperative Federalism)**

- **GS Paper 3 (Environment, Energy, and Technology)**

- **Current Affairs and Government Policies**

2. Disaster Management in Himachal Pradesh: Formation of Multi-Sectoral Central Team

Key Highlights for UPSC Civil Services Exam

1. **Formation of Multi-Sectoral Central Team**

   o Due to **increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters** in Himachal Pradesh (e.g., cloudbursts, flash floods, landslides), **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** has ordered the formation of a **multi-sectoral Central Team**.

   o The team includes experts from:

      - **NDMA** (National Disaster Management Authority)

      - **CBRI Roorkee** (Central Building Research Institute)

      - **IITM Pune** (Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology)

      - **Geologists** and

- **IIT Indore**, ensuring a **scientific and multidisciplinary assessment**.

2. **Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) for On-Ground Assessment**

   o A **separate IMCT** was **deputed in advance** (18–21 July 2025) to assess damage caused during the **2025 South-West Monsoon**, even before receiving a formal memorandum from the state.

   o This proactive step reflects the **Centre's commitment to real-time disaster management**.

3. **Financial Assistance and Relief Measures**

   o ₹**2006.40 crore** approved for recovery and reconstruction from 2023 disasters.

   o ₹**451.44 crore** released as the **first installment** on 7 July 2025.

   o ₹**198.80 crore** released as **first installment from SDRF** on 18 June 2025 for immediate relief.

   o Emphasis on **rapid fund disbursal and preemptive action**.

4. **Operational Support and Logistics**

   o **13 NDRF teams deployed** across Himachal Pradesh.

   o **Logistic support** includes **Army teams, Air Force assistance**, and **coordination with state agencies** for rescue and relief operations.

   o Reflects **integrated disaster response mechanisms** between Centre and State.

5. **Constitutional and Legal Provisions**

   o **Disaster Management Act, 2005** governs India's disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

   o Under the **Seventh Schedule**, disaster management falls under the **Union List** (Entry 23) and **Concurrent List** (Entry 29), allowing coordinated central-state efforts.

   o **State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)** and **National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)** are the two statutory funds under Section 46–48 of the Act.

6. **Scientific and Technological Focus**

   o The inclusion of **meteorological and geological institutes** emphasizes a **data-driven, early-warning-based approach**.

   o Ensures long-term strategies for **climate resilience and infrastructure planning** in Himalayan states.

Key Definitions for UPSC

- **NDMA**: Apex statutory body for disaster management, headed by the Prime Minister.

- **IMCT**: A team comprising officials from various ministries, deputed for on-ground disaster damage assessment.

- **SDRF**: State Disaster Response Fund; a grant-in-aid from the Centre to states for relief activities.

- **CBRI**: A research institute under CSIR, focuses on building safety and structural resilience.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The Central Government's proactive approach in **constituting multi-disciplinary expert teams**, **deploying NDRF units**, and **ensuring timely fund release** for Himachal Pradesh demonstrates a **robust and collaborative disaster governance model**. With **climate change-induced vulnerabilities** increasing, such multi-sectoral interventions are crucial.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper 2** – Federalism, Disaster Governance, Role of Inter-Ministerial Coordination

- **GS Paper 3** – Disaster Management, Climate Resilience, Environmental Vulnerability

- **Essay and Ethics Paper** – Topics like "Governance in Times of Crisis", "Ethical Response to Natural Disasters"

This development highlights India's evolving framework for **adaptive, evidence-based, and cooperative disaster response**—a critical topic for both Prelims and Mains.

3. Kashi Declaration and Youth Spiritual Summit: A National Movement for Nasha Mukt Yuva Bharat

Key Highlights for UPSC Civil Services Exam

1. **Launch of the *Kashi Declaration* at Youth Spiritual Summit**

   o The **Youth Spiritual Summit** concluded in **Varanasi** with the formal adoption of the **Kashi Declaration**, a visionary roadmap for a **youth-led, spiritually inspired anti-drug movement** in India.

   o Over **600 youth leaders** from **120+ spiritual and cultural organisations** participated in sessions discussing drug addiction, rehabilitation, and prevention strategies.

2. **Five-Year National Roadmap to Combat Substance Abuse**

   o The Kashi Declaration outlines a **5-year plan (till 2030)** with the aim of achieving a **drug-free India by 2047**.

   o It calls for a **whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach**, involving ministries, institutions, youth clubs, spiritual organisations, and civil society.

3. **Institutional Mechanisms Proposed**

   o Formation of a **Joint National Committee** to coordinate anti-drug efforts across ministries.

   o Annual reporting mechanisms and a **national digital platform** to link individuals with support and rehabilitation services.

   o Emphasis on integrating **spiritual, educational, cultural, and technological tools** in tackling addiction.

4. **Spiritual and Cultural Leadership in Drug De-addiction**

    o   The summit emphasized **Bharat's spiritual heritage** as a source of strength for moral and mental resilience.

    o   Spiritual institutions are positioned as **backbone actors** in this "*Maha Abhiyan*" against drug abuse, fostering discipline, values, and social reform.

5. **MY Bharat Framework for Ground-Level Action**

    o   The campaign will be implemented under the **MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat)** platform through:

        ▪   **Youth pledges and signature drives**

        ▪   **Awareness and outreach campaigns**

        ▪   **Volunteer-led community interventions**

    o   Progress will be monitored at the **Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026**.

6. **Legal and Constitutional Provisions**

    o   **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**: Main legal framework to combat drug trafficking and abuse.

    o   **Article 47 (DPSP)** of the Constitution: Directs the State to **prohibit the consumption of intoxicating drugs** harmful to health.

    o   The program aligns with **public health goals, youth development**, and **national capacity building**.

Definitions and Concepts

*   **Nasha Mukt Bharat**: A central government campaign promoting a drug-free India through education, awareness, and rehabilitation.

*   **MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat)**: A youth-led movement and platform designed to involve the young generation in national development efforts.

*   **Kashi Declaration**: A formal outcome document and action roadmap from the Youth Spiritual Summit focused on youth-led drug de-addiction programs.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The **Kashi Declaration** represents a **civilisationally rooted, youth-powered, and spiritually anchored response** to the growing menace of substance abuse in India. It strengthens the connection between **public health, youth leadership, and cultural-spiritual institutions**, marking a **new paradigm in national social movements**.

UPSC Relevance

*   **GS Paper 1**: Role of society and culture in social reform movements

*   **GS Paper 2**: Government schemes, health policy, role of civil society

*   **GS Paper 3**: Challenges to internal security—drug trafficking and organized crime

*   **GS Paper 4 (Ethics)**: Role of youth, moral values, and community leadership

- **Essay Paper**: Topics on youth-led transformation, societal challenges, national movements

The Kashi Declaration is a model example of multi-stakeholder governance, spiritual nationalism, and youth engagement—core themes for UPSC preparation.

4. Bharat NCX 2025: Strengthening India's Cybersecurity Architecture

Key Highlights

1. **Strategic Launch of Bharat NCX 2025**

   o Officially inaugurated by **Deputy National Security Advisor**, in collaboration with **Rashtriya Raksha University** and **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)**.

   o Theme: **"Enhancing the Operational Preparedness of Indian Cyberspace"**.

   o Focuses on **real-world simulations of cyber incidents**, such as:

      ▪ Attacks on critical infrastructure

      ▪ Deepfake manipulation

      ▪ API security breaches

      ▪ Autonomous malware attacks

2. **Capacity Building through Live Simulations and Collaboration**

   o The **two-week exercise (July 21 – August 1, 2025)** offers **immersive training** in **IT and Operational Technology (OT)** system vulnerabilities.

   o Encourages joint participation from **government, defence, private sector, and academia**, boosting **inter-sectoral cooperation** on cyber resilience.

3. **Use of Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies**

    o   Emphasis on the role of **AI in cyber defence**: threat detection, automated response, and behavioral analytics.

    o   Aims to **lower susceptibility to cyberattacks**, **accelerate incident recovery**, and improve **decision-making during cyber crises**.

4. **Strategic Policy Engagement and Stakeholder Involvement**

    o   **STRATEX (Strategic Decision-Making Exercise)** brings together top decision-makers to simulate **national cyber crisis response**.

    o   **CISO Conclave** unites government and industry leaders to discuss AI integration, OT security, and evolving regulatory needs.

    o   A **Cybersecurity Startup Exhibition** showcases **Indian tech solutions**, aligning with **Atmanirbhar Bharat** goals.

5. **Legal and Institutional Context**

    o   **Information Technology Act, 2000**: Legal foundation for cybersecurity, data protection, and cybercrime prevention.

    o   **National Cyber Security Policy, 2013** (due for revision): Envisions building **secure and resilient cyberspace**.

    o   Institutional mechanisms: **CERT-In**, **NSCS**, and **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)**.

6. **Cybersecurity as a National Security Imperative**

    o   Deputy NSA emphasized cybersecurity as the **bedrock of national security**, covering sectors like **healthcare, energy, transport, defence, and digital governance**.

    o   Cyber-attacks are no longer isolated tech issues but **strategic tools used by state and non-state actors**.

Key Definitions for UPSC

-   **Cyber Resilience**: The ability of an organization or nation to prepare for, respond to, and recover from cyber threats with minimal disruption.

-   **Operational Technology (OT)**: Hardware and software that detects or causes changes through direct monitoring and control of physical devices (e.g., power grids, factories).

-   **CISO (Chief Information Security Officer)**: A senior-level executive responsible for developing and implementing an information security program.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

Bharat NCX 2025 reflects **India's evolving cybersecurity doctrine**—one that integrates **real-time preparedness, cross-sectoral collaboration, and indigenous tech innovation**. The inclusion of **AI, OT security, strategic decision-making, and start-up engagement** makes it a **model initiative** for tackling modern cyber threats in a digital-first era.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2**: Role of government institutions in national security; cooperative federalism in digital governance.

- **GS Paper 3**: Cybersecurity, role of technology in internal security, AI and national preparedness.

- **Essay Paper**: Themes like "Technology as a Tool of Governance and Security", "Cybersecurity in the Age of Digital Sovereignty"

- **Ethics Paper (GS-4)**: Responsible technology use, integrity in digital leadership, cybersecurity as public duty.

Bharat NCX 2025 is a landmark in India's cyber governance ecosystem—demonstrating capacity building, digital sovereignty, and whole-of-nation readiness.

5. Unsafe Tap Water in Delhi: NGT Orders DJB to Act on E. coli Contamination

Key Summary for UPSC (in 5–6 Bullet Points)

1. **Detection of E. coli in Tap Water:**

   o The *Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)*, in its report to the *National Green Tribunal (NGT)*, confirmed *high levels of E. coli* and *total coliform* bacteria in five out of six water samples from A1 Block, Janakpuri (Delhi).

   o These bacteria, originating from human and animal waste, indicate *contamination of potable water with sewage*—posing a serious public health risk.

2. **Citizen Complaint and Legal Intervention:**

   o A *Residents Welfare Association (RWA)* had filed a petition before the NGT in March 2025, alleging *mixing of sewage in the Delhi Jal Board's (DJB) water supply* due to blocked sewage lines and corroded water pipelines.

   o The NGT directed the DJB to provide clean water through alternate means until the infrastructure is fixed.

3. **Outdated Infrastructure and Delayed Repairs:**

   o The DJB admitted in court that the *existing water and sewage pipelines are over 40 years old*. While it committed to completing repairs by June 30, tests conducted on that day still showed *high contamination*, indicating failure to act effectively.

4. **Future Course of Action Ordered:**

   o The NGT directed:

   - Immediate supply of clean water from an *alternative source*.

   - *Overhaul of outdated infrastructure* post-monsoon, to be completed within six months after contract award.

   - The *CPCB to conduct fresh sampling* to verify the current situation.

5. **Government Assurance:**

   o Delhi's Water Minister, Parvesh Sahib Singh, has promised a *complete overhaul of the water pipeline system within a year* to address recurring contamination issues.

Important Legal and Constitutional Provisions

- **Right to Clean Drinking Water**: Implied under *Article 21* of the Constitution (Right to Life) as interpreted by the Supreme Court in various judgments.

- **Water Supply and Sanitation**: A subject under *State List (List II)* of the Seventh Schedule, but public health emergencies allow for *central oversight via NGT and CPCB*.

- **National Green Tribunal Act, 2010**: Empowers NGT to take up matters related to environmental protection and conservation of natural resources.

- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**: Empowers CPCB to set standards and monitor water quality.

Definitions of Key Terms

- **E. coli**: *Escherichia coli*, a bacterium commonly found in intestines. Its presence in water signals *fecal contamination* and the potential for waterborne diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, and cholera.

- **Coliform Bacteria**: Indicator organisms used to detect the presence of *microbial contamination* in water.

- **CPCB**: A statutory organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, responsible for water and air quality monitoring.

Conclusion

The case highlights a *critical failure in urban water infrastructure*, with serious public health consequences. Despite assurances and submissions by the DJB, the persistence of E. coli contamination reflects poor maintenance, delayed response, and aging infrastructure. The proactive role of NGT and CPCB has been crucial in ensuring remedial action and public accountability.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (Governance, Public Health & Constitution)**: Role of State agencies, NGT, and CPCB in safeguarding health and environmental rights.

- **GS Paper 3 (Environment & Disaster Management)**: Issues related to *urban sanitation, water quality standards*, and institutional accountability.

- **Ethics Case Studies (GS Paper 4)**: Public accountability and administrative ethics in essential service delivery.

- **Current Affairs & Essay Topics**: Urban governance failures, water crisis, environmental justice.

6. Ideas on Trial, Critical Thinking in Retreat

Key Takeaways (5–6 Points)

1. **Erosion of Intellectual and Academic Freedom:**

o Across many democracies, especially diverse ones like India, universities and academic spaces are increasingly facing *pressure to conform*, where *critical thinking and dissent* are being stifled.

o Faculty and students face *reprimand, dismissal, or punishment* for expressing views that differ from dominant narratives, curbing healthy academic discourse.

2. **Suppressing Dissent Undermines Democracy:**

o Democratic societies thrive on *dissent, debate, and disagreement*. However, branding dissenting voices as "anti-national" or "seditious" erodes the very foundation of democracy and pluralism.

o *Noam Chomsky* and *Hannah Arendt* warn against the dangers of conformity and the "banality of evil" that emerges when public debate is silenced.

3. **Freedom Is Being Politicized:**

o The politicization of knowledge and censorship of intellectual spaces is leading to "**manufactured consent**" — a democracy in appearance, not in substance.

o The *rewriting of curricula for ideological purposes*, targeting of independent scholars, and pressurizing the media indicate growing authoritarian tendencies.

4. **Impact on National Unity and Global Perception:**

o Real unity comes through inclusive dialogue, not through *fear or coerced silence*. National strength must be matched by moral strength and internal openness.

o Nations are respected globally not only for economic power but also for upholding *civil liberties and freedom of thought*.

5. **Hope Through Resistance and Conscience:**

o Despite suppression, history has shown that the *spirit of free inquiry* endures through protest, individual courage, and intellectual integrity.

o Referencing *Václav Havel* and *Rosa Luxemburg*, the article emphasizes that *true freedom* means allowing space for voices that think differently.

6. **Educational Institutions Must Remain Free Spaces:**

o Universities must retain their role as spaces for questioning, exploring, and imagining new futures — not as tools of ideological policing.

o Suppression leads to stagnation, alienation of youth, and eventual societal decline.

Definitions of Key Concepts

- **Intellectual Freedom**: The right of individuals to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds without restriction.

- **Academic Freedom**: The freedom of teachers and students to teach, learn, and communicate ideas or facts without fear of repression or job loss.

- **Manufactured Consent** (Noam Chomsky): The shaping of public opinion by those in power through manipulation and control of information.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions Relevant to India

- **Article 19(1)(a)** – *Freedom of speech and expression* is a fundamental right under the Constitution of India.

- **Article 21** – *Right to life and personal liberty* includes the right to think, express, and access knowledge.

- **Article 51A(h)** – Fundamental Duty of every citizen "to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform."

- **UGC Guidelines** – Promote autonomy of higher education institutions and academic freedom.

Conclusion

The article underscores that a nation's moral authority, democratic health, and innovation capacity depend on *upholding intellectual freedom*. Suppressing critical thought in the name of unity or nationalism is a *false binary*. A democracy that fears its thinkers risks hollowing itself from within. *Democratic vitality must include courage to listen, debate, and dissent.*

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2** (Polity & Governance): Topics like *democracy*, *fundamental rights*, *role of institutions* (judiciary, UGC, universities), and *civil society*.

- **GS Paper 4** (Ethics): Case studies on *moral courage*, *freedom of conscience*, and *public accountability*.

- **Essay Paper**: Topics on *freedom of speech*, *role of dissent*, and *importance of intellectual pluralism*.

- **Interview/Personality Test**: Opinion-based questions on *freedom of expression*, *national security vs. liberty*, and *role of universities in democracy*.

7. UK–India FTA and the Promise of Global Capability Centres (GCCs)

Key Highlights:

1. **India as a GCC Powerhouse:**

   o India hosts over **1,500 Global Capability Centres (GCCs)**, employing 1.9 million+ people.

   o GCCs provide strategic functions like **R&D, cybersecurity, analytics**, and **digital transformation** for global MNCs.

   o British companies are increasingly choosing India not just for cost efficiency but as an **innovation and technology hub**.

2. **Role of India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA):**

   o The proposed **FTA aims to ease regulations, promote data governance harmonization, and enable smoother professional mobility**.

   o A successful FTA would foster **cross-border collaboration**, reduce **double taxation**, and remove **data localization mandates**—key challenges currently limiting GCC growth.

3. **Strategic Alignment of Interests:**

   o For the **UK**, the FTA helps expand its post-Brexit digital economy footprint and ensures service sector access.

   o For **India**, the FTA aligns with:

      ▪ *Digital India Mission*

      ▪ *High-value service sector growth*

      ▪ *Employment generation through skill development*

4. **Policy Support & State-Level Push:**

   o MeitY is formulating a **national GCC framework** with NASSCOM, KPMG, Zinnov, etc., as announced in **Budget 2025**.

   o States like **Uttar Pradesh** are also pushing aggressively (e.g., hosting its first **GCC Conclave** with firms like Microsoft, TCS).

   o However, concerns remain whether **fragmented state-level policies** can hinder national integration of GCC growth.

5. **Challenges & Recommendations:**

   o Key legal/infrastructure issues: **double taxation**, **IP protection**, **fragmented standards**.

   o Experts have recommended:

      ▪ Framing a **dedicated National GCC Policy**.

      ▪ Promoting **talent diversity** and easing **cross-border professional mobility**.

      ▪ Leveraging the FTA to help Indian GCCs **climb the global value chain**.

6. **Towards a UK–India Knowledge Corridor:**

   o The FTA is positioned to create a **resilient, knowledge-based commerce corridor** between the two nations.

   o GCCs are central to this, combining **services, skills, and technology**—the pillars of the future global economy.

Definitions & Key Terms for UPSC:

- **GCC (Global Capability Centre):**
  A dedicated offshore unit of an MNC (Multinational Corporation) in another country that handles IT, operations, engineering, R&D, and digital transformation tasks.

- **FTA (Free Trade Agreement):**
  A pact between two or more countries to reduce trade barriers (tariffs, quotas, legal hurdles) and increase trade and investment flow.

- **Data Localization:**
  The requirement that data on a nation's citizens or residents be collected, processed, and stored inside the country.

Legal and Constitutional Relevance:

- **Article 246 & 7th Schedule:** Foreign trade and foreign affairs fall under the Union List — hence, the central government drives FTA negotiations.

- **Section 4, IT Act 2000** & **Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023** (relevant for data governance).

- **Industrial Policies & Budget 2025 Provisions** – specifically targeting skilling, AI, and digital economy.

Conclusion:

The UK–India FTA has immense potential to **redefine bilateral economic cooperation** beyond traditional trade in goods. **GCCs represent a futuristic economic zone** where India's digital strengths and the UK's innovation ecosystem can be synergized. If executed well, the FTA could unlock **high-value service sector employment**, strengthen India's **position in global digital trade**, and help India emerge as a **global knowledge and innovation hub**.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** India–UK bilateral ties, trade diplomacy.

- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Digital economy, employment, innovation & tech policy.

- **Essay & Ethics Papers:** Role of knowledge-based economies, service-led growth.

- **Prelims:** Definitions (FTA, GCC, data localization), Budget 2025 initiatives, IT policy.

8. Legal Status of the Right to Vote in India

Key Summary Points:

1. **Nature of the Right to Vote in India**:

   o Currently, the *right to vote* is classified as a **statutory right**, not a fundamental or constitutional right.

   o It is granted under **Section 62 of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951**, which states that only those whose names are in the electoral roll can vote, with exceptions like disqualification or imprisonment.

2. **Constitutional Provisions Related to Voting**:

   o **Article 326** of the Constitution provides for **universal adult franchise**, allowing every citizen aged 18 and above to vote, subject to disqualifications by law.

   o **Section 19 of RPA, 1950** mandates that a voter must be *ordinarily resident* in a constituency and aged 18+.

   o **Section 16 of RPA, 1950** disqualifies non-citizens from voter registration.

3. **Different Categories of Rights**:

   o **Natural Rights**: Inherent and inalienable (e.g., life, liberty); not directly enforceable unless part of fundamental rights.

   o **Fundamental Rights (Part III)**: Directly enforceable through **Article 32** (e.g., freedom of speech).

   o **Constitutional Rights**: Derived from the Constitution but outside Part III (e.g., property rights); enforceable through **Article 226**.

   o **Statutory Rights**: Created by ordinary legislation (e.g., voting rights, MGNREGA); enforceable as per specific statutes.

4. **Judicial Interpretations – Evolution of Status**:

   o **N.P. Ponnuswami (1952)** and **Jyoti Basu (1982)**: Voting is a *statutory right*.

   o **PUCL case (2003)**: Observed that voting is at least a *constitutional right*.

   o **Kuldip Nayar (2006)**: Reiterated voting is *statutory*, not constitutional.

   o **Raj Bala case (2015)**: Termed voting as a *constitutional right* based on PUCL.

   o **Anoop Baranwal case (2023)**: Majority reaffirmed voting as a *statutory right*.

5. **Justice Ajay Rastogi's Dissent in Anoop Baranwal (2023)**:

   o Argued that **right to vote reflects freedom of expression under Article 19(1)(a)**.

   o Linked it to the **basic structure** doctrine – free and fair elections.

   o Emphasized that even if not fundamental, it stems from **Article 326**, and hence may be considered a **constitutional right**.

Important Legal and Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 326**: Basis of universal adult franchise.

- **Article 19(1)(a)**: Freedom of speech and expression (used to support voting as expression).

- **Article 32**: Right to constitutional remedies for fundamental rights.

- **Article 226**: High Courts' power to enforce constitutional/statutory rights.

- **Section 62, RPA 1951**: Voting rights based on name in electoral roll.

- **Section 16 & 19, RPA 1950**: Conditions for voter registration and disqualification.

Definitions for Clarity:

- **Statutory Right**: A legal right granted and governed by legislative statute.

- **Constitutional Right**: A right rooted in the Constitution (but not necessarily fundamental).

- **Fundamental Right**: A basic human right guaranteed by the Constitution (Part III) and enforceable by the Supreme Court.

- **Basic Structure Doctrine**: Judicial principle that certain features (like democracy, rule of law) cannot be amended by Parliament.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance:

While the right to vote is foundational to Indian democracy, **it is legally a statutory right** governed by the Representation of the People Acts. However, **judicial interpretations vary**, and **there is a growing argument to elevate this right to constitutional or even fundamental status**, given its crucial link to **free and fair elections**, a **basic feature of the Constitution**.

For UPSC:

- This topic intersects **Polity**, **Judiciary**, and **Electoral Reforms**.

- Relevant for **GS Paper II** (Polity and Governance), and **Essay/Interview** sections.

- Candidates should be aware of the **evolution of voting rights**, **types of rights**, and **role of the judiciary in interpreting democratic principles**.

9. Parliament Initiates Impeachment Proceedings Against Justice Yashwant Varma

Key Highlights of the Case

- **Initiation of Removal Process**: Parliament has begun proceedings for the removal of **Justice Yashwant Varma** of the Allahabad High Court under **Article 217 read with Article 124(4)** of the Indian Constitution and the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**.

- **Bipartisan Support in Lok Sabha**: A total of **152 Lok Sabha members**, including both ruling and opposition MPs (e.g., Ravi Shankar Prasad, Rahul Gandhi, Anurag Thakur), signed the notice, exceeding the minimum requirement of 100.

- **Rajya Sabha Notice by Opposition**: 63 Rajya Sabha MPs from opposition parties also signed the motion—exceeding the required 50-member threshold.

- **Trigger for Action**: The move came after **burnt currency notes** were allegedly found at Justice Varma's official residence in Delhi, leading to his **transfer from Delhi High Court to Allahabad High Court**.

- **Committee to Investigate Charges**: Upon motion acceptance in both Houses, a 3-member committee will be formed (as per Judges Inquiry Act) comprising:

  o A senior Supreme Court judge,

  o A Chief Justice of a High Court,

  o A distinguished jurist.
    This committee must submit its report within **three months**.

Constitutional & Legal Provisions Involved

- **Article 124(4)**: A judge of the Supreme Court (applicable mutatis mutandis to High Courts under Article 217) can be removed only by an order of the President after an address by both Houses of Parliament supported by a **special majority**, on grounds of *proved misbehaviour or incapacity*.

- **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**: Provides for the detailed **procedure** for investigation, including the formation of an inquiry committee and tabling of its report in Parliament.

- **Motion Requirements**: Minimum of **100 Lok Sabha** or **50 Rajya Sabha** MPs must sign a removal motion to initiate the process.

Important Definitions

- **Impeachment (in Indian context)**: The process of removing a judge of the higher judiciary through a parliamentary process; not used for President alone in India.

- **Distinguished Jurist**: A legal expert of national reputation; part of the inquiry committee.

- **Proved Misbehaviour**: A legal standard requiring detailed inquiry and evidence before Parliament can act on misconduct allegations.

Additional Observations

- **Cross-party Support**: Signatories included BJP, Congress, DMK, IUML, RSP, and NCP(SP), reflecting bipartisan concern over the issue.

- **Ongoing Precedents**: A **similar motion** against Justice Shekhar Yadav (Allahabad HC) was submitted in Dec 2024 but is under verification due to discrepancies in signatures.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

The impeachment motion against Justice Yashwant Varma is a **rare and serious constitutional process**, highlighting the **checks and balances** within Indian democracy. It reflects **judicial accountability**, procedural rigor under **Article 124(4)**, and the functioning of the **Judges Inquiry Act, 1968**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2** – Polity & Governance:

  o Topics: *Structure, organization and functioning of the Judiciary*, *Parliamentary procedures*, *Separation of powers*, *Judicial accountability*.

- **Prelims 2026 Focus Areas**:

  o Articles 124, 217, Judges Inquiry Act, composition of inquiry committee.

- **Ethics (GS Paper 4)**:

  o Issues of integrity and conduct in public office.

10. NISAR Satellite Launch: A Landmark in India–U.S. Space Cooperation

Key Highlights for UPSC Civil Services Exam

1. **First Joint NASA–ISRO Earth Observation Mission**

   o **NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar)** is the **first collaborative satellite mission** between NASA and ISRO.

   o Scheduled to be launched on **July 30 at 5:40 p.m.** from **Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota** using **GSLV-F16**.

2. **Unique Dual-Frequency SAR Technology**

   o NISAR will be the **first satellite to operate with dual-frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)**:

   ▪ **L-band radar** from **NASA** (penetrates vegetation and ice).

▪ **S-band radar** from **ISRO** (suitable for soil, land cover, infrastructure).

o The satellite uses a **12-metre unfurlable mesh reflector antenna** by NASA and ISRO's modified **I-3K satellite bus**.

3. **High-Resolution, All-Weather Earth Monitoring**

   o NISAR will orbit the Earth in a **sun-synchronous orbit at 743 km** with an inclination of **98.4°**.

   o It will use **SweepSAR technology** to scan a **242 km-wide swath**, offering **high spatial resolution**.

   o Capable of capturing data **day/night, all-weather**, with **12-day revisit cycles**.

4. **Applications Across Climate, Disaster, and Ecosystems**

   o Tracks **land deformation**, **glacial/ice sheet movement**, **vegetation dynamics**, and **soil moisture**.

   o Used in **disaster response**, **sea ice classification**, **storm intensity monitoring**, **flood mapping**, **surface water resources tracking**, and **coastal zone management**.

5. **Strategic Technology Partnership**

   o Product of **over a decade of collaboration** between ISRO and NASA's **Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)**.

   o Demonstrates India's growing role in **global Earth observation**, technology innovation, and **bilateral space diplomacy**.

Important Definitions for UPSC

- **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)**: A radar system used to create high-resolution images of Earth's surface by using motion of the radar antenna over a target region.

- **Sun-Synchronous Orbit (SSO)**: A near-polar orbit in which a satellite passes over the same part of the Earth at roughly the same local solar time, ideal for imaging applications.

- **SweepSAR**: A radar scanning technique allowing wide coverage with high resolution—used for global repeat imaging.

Legal/Policy Angle (GS-2 & GS-3)

- **Space Cooperation as a Tool of Foreign Policy**: Aligns with India's evolving space diplomacy and **Strategic Technology and Trade Cooperation (STTC)** with the USA.

- **Atmanirbhar Bharat in Space Sector**: ISRO's involvement in advanced technologies strengthens India's capabilities under the **Spacecom Policy 2020** and the upcoming **Space Activities Bill**.

- **Environment and Climate Monitoring**: Supports India's commitments under **Paris Climate Agreement**, **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**, and **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**.

Conclusion

NISAR is a **technological and diplomatic milestone** in Indo-U.S. relations and Earth observation science. With its dual-frequency SAR payload and wide-ranging applications, NISAR will **revolutionize how Earth systems are monitored**, especially in **climate change, agriculture, water, and disaster risk** management.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (International Relations)**: India–U.S. technological collaboration and global governance of space.

- **GS Paper 3 (Science & Tech, Environment)**: Remote sensing, space applications in agriculture, disaster management, and climate change.

- **Prelims Focus**:

    o NISAR full form and features (SAR, SweepSAR)

    o Sun-synchronous orbit

    o GSLV-F16

    o Dual-band radar (L-band, S-band)

- **Essay & Ethics**: Science for societal benefit, global cooperation in frontier technology.

11. Index of Eight Core Industries – June 2025 Performance

Key Highlights (June 2025 Data)

1. **Overall Growth Trend**:

    o Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) grew by **1.7% in June 2025**, a **3-month high**, but **lower than 5% growth** recorded in June 2024.

    o The growth is also **significantly below the FY 2024–25 average** of **6.3%**.

2. **Sectoral Performance**:

    o Out of 8 sectors, **5 sectors contracted** in June 2025.

    o **Strongest performers**:

        ▪ **Steel**: +9.3%

        ▪ **Cement**: +9.2%

        ▪ **Refinery Products**: +3.4%

    o **Major contracting sectors**:

        ▪ **Coal**: -6.8% (worst performing)

        ▪ **Electricity**: -2.8%

        ▪ **Natural Gas**: -2.8%

        ▪ **Crude Oil**: -1.2%

3. **Comparative Sectoral Insights**:

   o **Coal** sector reversed from 14.8% growth in June 2024 to -6.8% in June 2025.

   o **Electricity** sector's contraction (-2.8%) continued from May's -4.7%.

   o **Natural Gas** and **Crude Oil** continue to show negative growth trends, highlighting stress in fossil fuel segments.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)**: A monthly index published by the Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which tracks the performance of 8 key industrial sectors contributing ~40.27% weight in the IIP (Index of Industrial Production).

- **Core Industries**: Include:

  1. Coal

  2. Crude Oil

  3. Natural Gas

  4. Refinery Products

  5. Fertilizers

  6. Steel

  7. Cement

  8. Electricity

Constitutional & Legal Provisions (Relevant for UPSC)

- **Article 265** – No tax shall be levied or collected except by authority of law – relevant as industrial output affects tax revenue.

- **Article 39(b)** (Directive Principles) – Distribution of resources to subserve common good.

- **Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR)** and **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)** are important frameworks guiding investment in core sectors.

Additional Insights for Enrichment

- The contraction in **coal and electricity** suggests lower industrial and thermal power generation activity.

- Growth in **steel and cement** may be tied to ongoing infrastructure development and housing push under **PM Gati Shakti** and **urban renewal missions**.

- These indicators are crucial for **GDP forecasting**, **monetary policy adjustments**, and **infrastructure planning**.

Conclusion

Despite being a three-month high, the **1.7% growth in core sectors** in June 2025 highlights ongoing stress in India's industrial base. While select sectors like **steel and cement** remain resilient, persistent contraction in **energy sectors** raises concerns about sustainability and input availability for long-term economic expansion.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 3**: Indian Economy – Industrial growth, infrastructure, and planning.

- Useful for **Prelims**: Facts about core sectors and ICI.

- Useful for **Mains**:

  o Analytical writing on **India's industrial slowdown and revival strategy**.

  o Insights for questions on **resource distribution**, **energy policy**, and **sectoral reforms**.