



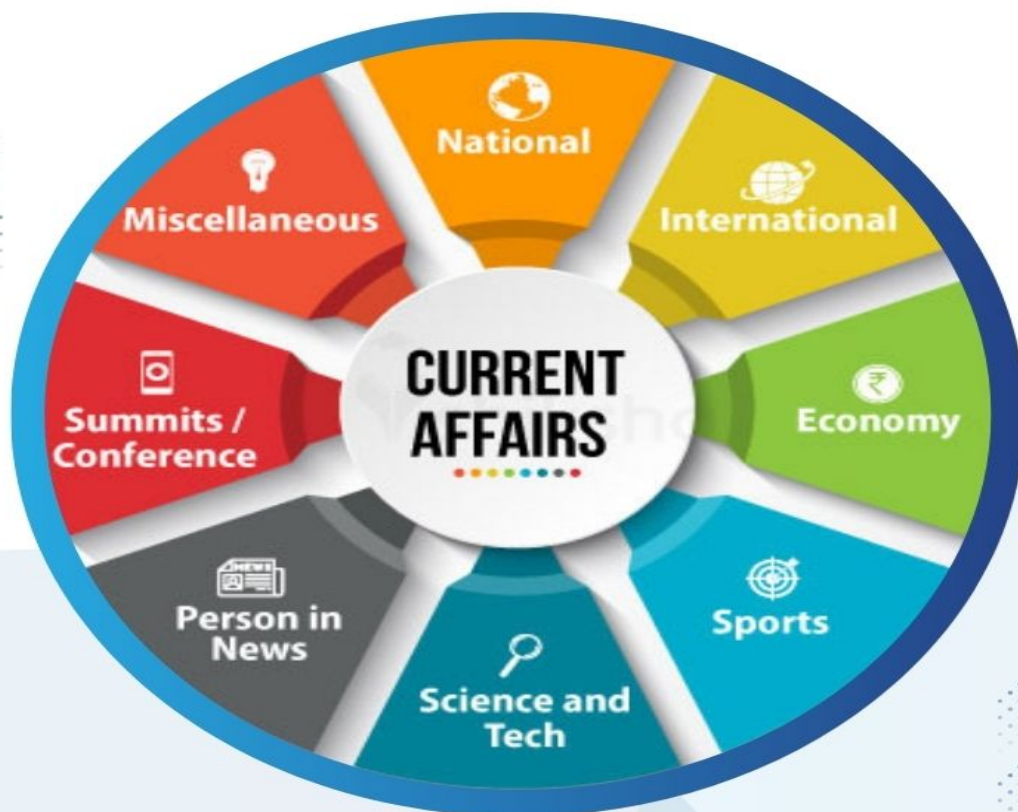
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FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 25/07/2025 (FRIDAY)



9972258970 & 9740702455

**#317/A SKB Arcade, D. Subbaiah Road,
Ramaswamy Circle, Mysuru-570004**



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I. Weekly Economic and Political Summary – Key Highlights

1. GDP Growth Estimates Revised Downwards

- Major institutions like ADB, IMF, and India Ratings revised **India's FY26 GDP growth projections** to a **range of 6.2%–6.5%**, citing weak domestic demand, reduced investment, and global trade headwinds.
- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** lowered its estimate from 6.7% (April) to **6.5%**, factoring in **US tariffs** and lower private investment.
- India Ratings and Research** cut its estimate to **6.3%**, reflecting internal demand fragility.

Definition – *GDP (Gross Domestic Product)* is the total value of goods and services produced within a country in a specific period.

2. CAG Report Flags Fiscal Transparency Gaps

- The **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** revealed **unrealized tax revenue of ₹21.3 trillion** in FY23.
- Discrepancy of ₹18,000 crore was noted between Budget estimates and final fiscal accounts.
- Indicates **non-compliance with the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003**, which mandates transparency and accountability in fiscal operations.

Constitutional Provision – *Article 148* provides for the CAG, an independent authority to audit all receipts and expenditures of the Union and State governments.

3. Trade Imbalance in Electronic Goods

- India's **electronics exports reached \$40.9 billion** in FY25, but **imports stood at \$102.6 billion**, indicating a **large trade deficit**.
- Export dependency on the **US increased to 37.3%** (from 14% in FY11); marginal growth observed in UAE, Netherlands, UK, and Italy markets.

Trade Deficit – Occurs when a country's imports exceed its exports, affecting foreign reserves and currency stability.

4. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar Resigns Early

- VP **Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned** citing health reasons, just **2 years and 344 days** into his tenure.
- Historically, early resignations were rare and often linked to elevation to the President's post.
- The **Election Commission** will soon announce the new **Vice Presidential election schedule**.

Constitutional Provision – *Article 63* provides for the office of the Vice President; *Article 66* deals with the method of election.

5. Corporate Profits Surge Despite Demand Weakness

- An analysis of 182 companies showed a **23% YoY profit increase in Q1 FY26**, driven by a **14% drop in input costs**.
- Excluding BFSI, profit growth was nearly **40%**, marking the **fastest surge in five quarters**.

BFSI Sector – Refers to Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance industries.



6. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) Turn Net Sellers

- After 3 months of inflows, **FPIs withdrew ₹4,508 crore in July 2025**, due to **US-India trade tensions** and **corporate earnings uncertainty**.
- In contrast, FPIs had invested ₹14,590 crore in June and ₹19,860 crore in May.

FPI – Foreign Portfolio Investment involves investors purchasing stocks, bonds, or other assets in a foreign country's financial markets.

Additional Key Insights

- **Forex Savings:** ₹60,681 crore saved due to an 8% drop in **coal imports**, driven by a 5% rise in **domestic production**.
- **Mobile-Based Trading:** Share of mobile trades on BSE hit **29% by May 2025**, up from just 10% in June 2020, showing increased **retail investor participation**.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

- The week reflects **macroeconomic caution**, challenges in **fiscal management**, and **political leadership transition**.
- Key issues such as **GDP projections**, **fiscal accountability**, **trade deficits**, and **foreign investment trends** are essential for **GS Paper III (Economy)** and **GS Paper II (Polity)**.
- Concepts of **FRBM Act**, **FPI**, **GDP**, and **CAG powers** are important for both **Prelims and Mains**.
- Use these developments in Essay writing and Ethics papers (issues of transparency and accountability).

2. India–UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA): Key Summary

1. CETA Signed to Boost Bilateral Trade

- India and the UK signed the **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)**, aiming to enhance trade to **\$120 billion by 2030**.
- The deal is India's **most wide-ranging trade agreement** post-COVID, and the **UK's most comprehensive pact in the Indo-Pacific** after Brexit.
- It awaits **ratification by both parliaments**, which may take six months or more.

Definition – Trade Agreement: A contractual arrangement between countries governing their trade relationships, typically aimed at reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers.

2. Major Gains for Indian Exports

- Nearly **45% of Indian exports** to the UK will now enter **duty-free**, benefiting **labour-intensive sectors** such as:

TRADE WIN		
This is the most comprehensive FTA signed by the UK in the Indo-Pacific region post-Brexit.		
UK's offer to India		
Goods	Current tariffs	Tariffs under FTA
Animal products	Upto 20%	99.3%*
Marine products	Upto 20%	Nil
Mechanical and electrical machinery	8-14%	Nil
Leather/footwear	Upto 16%	Nil
Processed food	Upto 70%	99.7%*
Textile/clothing	Upto 12%	Nil
Transport/auto	Upto 18%	Nil
Tea and coffee	Upto 10%	Nil
Spices	Upto 8%	Nil
Fruits	Upto 20%	Nil
*Tariff lines at zero duty		Source: India-UK FTA document
SHIP SHAPE		
NEARLY 45% of India's exports to the UK to enter duty-free	FTA kept out carbon border tax, post-study work visas	DUTY benefits on liquor, autos set in over the years



- **Seafood, textiles, leather footwear, gems & jewellery, and processed foods.**
- Tariffs on Indian processed food items in the UK reduced from **70% to 0%**.
- Exporters of **engineering goods, chemicals, base metals, and marine items** will now enjoy **zero duty** (previously 8–20%).

Preferential Market Access: A trade advantage given to one country over others, typically in the form of reduced tariffs or duty-free access.

3. Selective Liberalisation of UK Imports

- India will reduce tariffs gradually on **cosmetics, chocolates, medical devices, and aerospace components** from the UK.
- **Scotch whisky and luxury vehicles** will see phased tariff reductions under **quotas**; normal tariffs apply beyond limits.
- Tariffs on items like **UK's perfumes, soaps, and nail polish** to drop from ~20% to nearly **zero**.

Quota System: A trade restriction limiting the number or value of goods that can be imported/exported during a given period.

4. Sensitive Sectors Protected by India

- India has **excluded** items such as:
 - **Dairy products, fresh apples, vegetable seeds, gold bars, smartphones, and blue-veined cheese** from tariff concessions.
- These measures safeguard **domestic agriculture, micro-enterprises, and vulnerable sectors** from foreign competition.

Trade Sensitivity Clause: A provision in trade agreements allowing nations to shield specific sectors from tariff reductions due to socio-economic concerns.

5. Contentious Issues Kept Out

- The deal **excludes**:
 - The UK's proposed **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**.
 - **Post-study work visa** expansion for Indian students.
- Movement of professionals has seen only **modest liberalization**, despite earlier expectations.

Carbon Border Tax (CBAM): A climate policy tool that imposes tariffs on carbon-intensive imports to protect domestic industries and curb emissions leakage.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

- The India–UK CETA marks a **strategic reset** in bilateral ties, supporting India's **Make in India** and **export diversification** goals.
- It demonstrates **India's calibrated trade diplomacy**—balancing market access with domestic protection.
- The deal holds relevance for:
 - **GS Paper II: International Relations – Bilateral Relations.**



- **GS Paper III:** Economy – Trade Policy, Export Promotion, WTO.
- **Essay & Ethics:** Topics on globalisation, equity in trade, and sustainable development.

3. Draft National Telecom Policy 2025: Boosting Indigenous Telecom Manufacturing

A policy shift toward self-reliance, secure networks, and domestic innovation in telecom infrastructure

1. Promotion of Indigenous Telecom Equipment

- The draft National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2025 proposes incentives to telecom operators for using **indigenously designed and manufactured telecom equipment**.
- Aims to reduce reliance on foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) such as Nokia, Ericsson, Samsung, and Cisco.
- Indian companies like **Tejas Networks, HFCL, STL**, and telecom startups are expected to benefit.

Definition – Indigenisation: Developing and producing goods and services within the country to reduce import dependency and enhance domestic capabilities.

2. Ambitious Targets for Domestic Manufacturing

- The government targets a **150% increase in domestic telecom manufacturing output** over the next five years.
- Aims for **50% import substitution** in telecom equipment through locally designed, developed, and manufactured products.
- Key products include routers, transmission gear, switches, and set-top boxes.

Definition – Import Substitution: Economic strategy to replace imported goods with domestically produced ones to encourage self-sufficiency.

3. Past Policy Execution Gaps

- The 2018 National Digital Communications Policy included similar incentives but lacked effective implementation.
- Under the **Telecom PLI Scheme (2021)**, out of ₹12,195 crore approved over five years, only ₹1,162 crore was disbursed by FY25.
- Only half of the 42 shortlisted companies received benefits, raising concerns over slow disbursements and procedural inefficiencies.

4. Strategic Goals of NTP 2025

The draft policy outlines six strategic missions:

- Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity
- Promotion of innovation and R&D
- Growth in domestic telecom manufacturing
- Creation of a secure and trusted telecom network
- Ease of doing business in the telecom sector
- Development of a sustainable and green telecom ecosystem



Definition – Ease of Doing Business: The simplification of regulations and procedures to encourage private investment and entrepreneurship.

5. Industry Feedback and Implementation Challenges

- Experts highlighted the need for:
 - Clear demand visibility
 - Streamlined public procurement
 - Timely incentive disbursements
 - Stronger R&D support and global competitiveness
- Concerns remain about whether the policy will move beyond paper and into effective practice.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The Draft National Telecom Policy 2025 represents a critical step toward strengthening India's telecom sovereignty, ensuring secure digital infrastructure, and boosting the Make in India mission. However, the success of this policy hinges on effective execution, stakeholder alignment, and capacity-building.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Industrial Policy, Infrastructure, Innovation, PLI Scheme, E-Governance
- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Policy Frameworks, Digital India, Centre-Industry coordination
- **Essay Paper:** Themes around Technology Sovereignty, Atmanirbharta, Public Policy Design
- **Ethics Paper:** Issues in Policy Implementation, Accountability, and Public Trust

4. India's Private Sector Output Remains Robust – PMI Signals Strong Economic Momentum (July 2025)

1. PMI Indicates Strong Expansion in Economic Activity

- The **Composite PMI Output Index** stood at **60.7 in July 2025**, indicating a **sustained expansion** in India's private sector activity.
- A value **above 50 indicates expansion**; the current reading is significantly higher than the long-term average of 54.8.
- The index reflects **growth in both manufacturing and services**, though manufacturing showed a sharper rise in July.

Definition – PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index): An economic indicator derived from monthly surveys of private sector companies. It tracks business conditions like new orders, output, employment, and supplier deliveries.

2. Manufacturing Sector Shows Highest Growth in 18 Years

- The **Manufacturing PMI rose to 59.2 in July**, up from 58.4 in June – its **highest in nearly 18 years**, suggesting strong recovery and expansion.
- The **PMI Output Index for manufacturing** was at 62.5, up from 62.1 in June.
- This indicates a robust improvement in **new orders, output, and inventories**.



3. Services Sector Growth Softens Slightly

- While the **services sector** continued to grow, the pace of expansion in July was **slightly softer** than in previous months.
- Despite the dip, growth remained **well above historical standards**, supported by solid **domestic demand**.

4. Global Demand Aids Export and Output Growth

- **New export orders and total sales** expanded strongly in July, reinforcing the role of **global demand** in supporting India's economic recovery.
- The **manufacturing sector** benefited more than services from this global uptick, with foreign demand strengthening factory orders.

5. PMI as a Real-Time Economic Indicator

- PMI is valued for offering **early signals** on economic trends ahead of official GDP data.
- High PMI readings signal **confidence among producers**, stable supply chains, and **strong consumer and external demand**.

Definition – Composite PMI: An average of the manufacturing and services PMI, providing an overall picture of private sector health.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The July 2025 PMI data points to **continued economic resilience**, driven by **strong manufacturing performance** and **steady service sector growth**. It reflects India's growing integration with global value chains and the success of production-led reforms.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper III – Economy:**
 - Economic growth trends
 - Industrial performance indicators
 - Role of manufacturing in GDP
- **GS Paper II – Governance:**
 - Impact of global demand on domestic sectors
- **Essay & Interview:**
 - Themes on economic recovery, manufacturing-led growth, and India's global trade integration.

Note for UPSC:

Understanding **PMI trends** helps interpret macroeconomic health, assess investment sentiment, and prepare policy responses – making it essential for both Prelims (conceptual clarity) and Mains (analytical use in answers).



5. India Resists EU's Oversight Proposal on Capital Flows – Key Summary

Key Highlights

- **India opposes EU's proposal on capital flow oversight** as part of ongoing **India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** negotiations.
- The **EU's demand** seeks a role in influencing decisions related to **capital movement regulations**, which India sees as a **sovereign policy prerogative**.
- **Capital Flows** refer to the movement of money for investment, trade, or business production between countries, including **foreign direct investment (FDI)** and **portfolio investment**.
- India is concerned that such oversight may **restrict policy flexibility**, especially **during economic or financial crises** when unilateral capital control may be required to **protect macroeconomic stability**.
- The proposal is **not common** in most FTAs, making it **unusual and intrusive**, according to Indian officials.
- India prefers maintaining **autonomy** in regulating capital flows, as it is directly linked to **monetary sovereignty**, **financial stability**, and **domestic policy priorities**.

Legal & Constitutional Context

- **Article 246 & 265 of the Indian Constitution:** Grant the Union exclusive powers to legislate and levy taxes or control capital movements.
- **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999:** Regulates cross-border capital movement and empowers the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to impose restrictions in the public interest.
- **RBI's Mandate:** As India's central bank, it has the authority to manage **foreign exchange reserves**, capital account convertibility, and impose capital controls as per evolving macroeconomic needs.



Additional Key Points

- The EU-India FTA talks have seen **slow progress** due to **differences over tariffs, sustainability standards, and regulatory autonomy**.
- India is cautious about commitments that may **compromise regulatory independence** or expose it to **investor-state disputes**.
- A **Balance of Payments (BoP) crisis** or **currency volatility** may necessitate sudden capital control measures, and **external oversight** could delay such responses.
- India has **gradually liberalized** its capital account, but full convertibility is still avoided to ensure **prudential financial management**.

Conclusion

India's resistance to EU's proposal on capital flow oversight reflects its emphasis on **sovereign control over economic levers**, especially those affecting **financial and monetary stability**. While India supports free trade and investment, it seeks to avoid binding clauses that could constrain **policy autonomy** during crises or affect national interest.

**UPSC Relevance**

- **GS Paper 2:** International Relations – Bilateral, Regional & Global Groupings (India-EU FTA)
- **GS Paper 3:** Indian Economy – Capital Account Convertibility, FEMA, RBI's role, Globalization and its impact on sovereignty.
- **Prelims:** Terms like Capital Flows, FEMA, Capital Account Convertibility.
- **Ethics Paper (GS-4):** Case study angle – Balancing national interest with global cooperation.

6. New Norms for 27% Ethanol Blending in Petrol to be Announced Soon**Summary:**

- **New Ethanol Blending Norms Expected by August 2025**
The Government of India plans to announce guidelines for achieving 27% ethanol blending in petrol by the end of August, as per Union Minister Nitin Gadkari. This move aims to reduce fossil fuel dependence and promote cleaner energy alternatives.
- **Current Status: 20% Ethanol Blending Achieved**
India had earlier targeted 20% ethanol blending (E20) in petrol by 2025 and has already met this milestone ahead of schedule. The new push toward a 27% blend aligns with global standards, especially Brazil, where the ethanol blend is already at 27%.
- **Definition – Ethanol Blending**
Ethanol blending refers to mixing ethanol (a biofuel usually derived from sugarcane or maize) with petrol to reduce carbon emissions, boost farmers' income, and decrease import dependence on crude oil.
- **Policy and Economic Benefits**
Higher ethanol blending supports the National Bio-Energy Policy and the Ethanol Blending Programme (EBP). It reduces the oil import bill, supports rural agriculture through demand for sugarcane and grains, and improves environmental sustainability.
- **Environmental and Energy Security Angle**
Ethanol-blended petrol burns cleaner, helping reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. It also strengthens India's energy security by reducing reliance on foreign oil.
- **Constitutional & Legal Framework**
 - *Article 48A:* Directive Principle of State Policy, mandates protection and improvement of the environment.
 - *National Policy on Biofuels (2018):* Provides for phased implementation of ethanol blending targets.
 - *Environment Protection Act, 1986:* Authorizes the regulation of fuel quality to control emissions.

**Conclusion:**

The shift to 27% ethanol blending reflects India's proactive approach in achieving sustainable energy goals,



supporting Make in India through domestic ethanol production, and aligning with global environmental commitments under the Paris Agreement.

UPSC Relevance:

- GS Paper 3: Environment (Biofuels, Pollution Control), Energy
- GS Paper 2: Government Policies & Interventions
- Prelims: Bioenergy, National Bio-Energy Policy, Ethanol Blending Programme
- Essay/Interview: Climate action, Sustainable Development, Clean Energy Transition

7. India Secures Expanded Market Access for Agricultural and Food Exports to UK under CETA

Key Highlights:

1. Zero-Duty Access for Indian Farm & Food Products

- Under the India-UK *Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)*, Indian exports like edible oils, oilseeds, cereals, fruits, vegetables, spices, and processed food will now enjoy **zero import duty** in the UK.
- This places Indian exporters on par with competitors from EU nations like Germany and the Netherlands, enhancing competitiveness in the British market.

2. Targeted and Strategic Market Access

- India's tariff commitments are **selective and strategic**, safeguarding sensitive domestic agriculture sectors (like dairy, poultry, bovine meat, and processed animal products).
- Limited concessions were granted to the UK on specific products such as **lamb meat, seafood, and live breeding animals**, while critical Indian farm interests were protected.

3. Boost for Indian Seafood and Marine Exports

- Tariffs of up to 20% on **marine and animal products** have been eliminated, benefiting coastal states like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha.
- Exports of shrimp, prawns, and fish could rise to **\$180–200 million annually**, expanding India's footprint in the UK's \$5.4 billion seafood market.

4. Processed Food Sector Gains

- Import tariffs as high as 70% on Indian processed foods have been removed on **99.7% of tariff lines**, providing significant opportunities for agri-businesses and the rural economy.
- In FY25, India exported ~\$785 million worth of agricultural products to the UK, a figure expected to grow due to improved access.

'Benchmark deal...trade will double by 2030'

Union commerce minister argues trade pact with UK will not just make India a major exporter to Britain and benefit Indian companies, it will also increase incomes in farming & fishing communities



5. High-Value British Imports into India

- In return, **British exports** such as **spirits, salmon, mackerel, trout, and lamb meat** will become more affordable in India due to removal of import duties.
- This reflects the **reciprocal nature** of trade negotiations, enhancing consumer choices in both countries.

6. Legal and Policy Framework

- Trade negotiations are governed by **Article 246A** (Goods and Services Tax), **Article 301** (Freedom of trade), and **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992**.
- The **Agricultural Export Policy, 2018** and **Atmanirbhar Bharat** mission also encourage diversification and value addition in agri-exports.

Definitions for UPSC

- **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA):** A bilateral free trade agreement that reduces or eliminates tariffs and trade barriers across sectors including goods, services, investment, and intellectual property.
- **Tariff Lines:** A product-level classification used in trade negotiations to apply tariffs.

Conclusion:

The India-UK CETA significantly boosts India's agricultural and food processing exports, especially in high-potential areas like seafood, edible oils, and processed foods. By securing **zero-duty access** while protecting domestic sensitivities, India has demonstrated a **balanced and strategic trade negotiation** approach. It enhances the country's global trade footprint and supports employment in rural and coastal economies.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper 2:** Bilateral relations, International Agreements
- **GS Paper 3:** Agriculture, Economy (Trade, Food Processing), Infrastructure (Ports, Cold Chains)
- **Prelims:** Trade terms (CETA, Tariff Lines, Zero-Duty), Export-Import stats
- **Essay/Interview:** Agriculture and Trade Policy, Doubling Farmer Income, Atmanirbhar Bharat

8. Pollution Control Plans for 130 Indian Cities: Key Summary

Key Highlights

- **Launch of City-Specific Plans under NCAP:**
The Government of India has launched air pollution control action plans across **130 cities** with populations over **1 million**, as part of the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** initiated in **2019**.
- **Targeted Pollution Sources:**
The plans focus on key sources of air pollution, including:





- **Soil and road dust**
- **Vehicular emissions**
- **Domestic fuel burning**
- **Municipal solid waste burning**
- **Construction materials and activities**
- **Industrial emissions**
- **Source Apportionment (SA) Studies:**

These are localized studies identifying major contributors to **Particulate Matter (PM10)**.

 - **Dust from roads and construction activities** contributes **40–50%** of PM10 in most cities.
 - SA helps in scientific policy formulation for pollution control.
- **Financial Allocation and Utilization:**
 - A total of **₹13,036 crore** has been allocated since FY 2019–20 till July 2025.
 - Out of this, **₹9,209 crore** has already been utilized by **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** for executing air quality improvement measures.
- **Government Measures for Pollution Control:**
 - **Vehicular Pollution:** Introduction of **BS-VI fuel norms**, skipping BS-V altogether.
 - **Electric Mobility:** Launch of schemes such as **PM e-Drive** and **PM-eBus Sewa** to promote electric vehicles.
 - **Urban Measures:** Emphasis on **traffic decongestion, road improvement, junction redesign, and greening open spaces.**
- **Industrial Pollution Control:**
 - Industries are responsible for adopting pollution control technologies.
 - **State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)** are tasked with monitoring and enforcing emission standards.

Definitions & Legal Context

- **Particulate Matter (PM10):**

Airborne particles with a diameter of 10 micrometers or less; they penetrate the respiratory system and are linked to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.
- **Source Apportionment:**

A scientific method used to estimate the contribution of various pollution sources to the total ambient air pollution.
- **NCAP (National Clean Air Programme):**

A central sector scheme aimed at achieving a **20–30% reduction in PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations** by 2024 (baseline 2017), now extended further.
- **Constitutional Provision:**



- **Article 48A:** Duty of the State to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
- **Article 51A(g):** Fundamental duty of citizens to protect and improve the natural environment.

Conclusion

India's targeted pollution control initiative under the NCAP is a significant policy response to the growing crisis of urban air pollution. By integrating scientific studies, urban planning, industrial compliance, and electric mobility, it aims to tackle pollution holistically.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 3 – Environment & Ecology:** Urban pollution, government initiatives, environmental governance.
- **GS Paper 2 – Governance:** Role of ULBs, intergovernmental coordination.
- **Essay/Interview:** Use of SA studies, urban air quality, e-mobility transition.
- **Prelims:** NCAP, BS-VI norms, PM10, SA studies, constitutional articles on environment.

9. India-Israel Strategic Partnership: Key Highlights

1. India as a 'Key Strategic Ally' of Israel

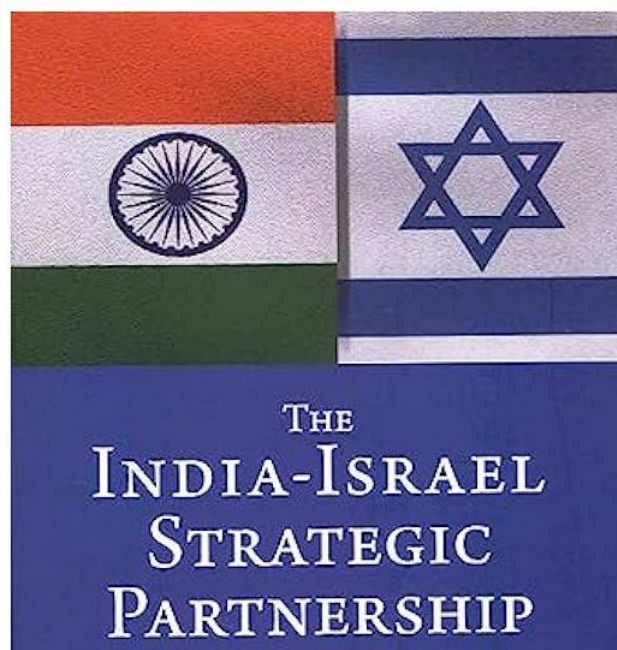
- Israel officially referred to India as a "*key strategic ally*", underlining the depth and trust in the bilateral relationship.
- The strategic partnership has been termed "*resilient through difficult times*", suggesting continuity and reliability despite regional or global challenges.

2. Emphasis on Defence and Strategic Cooperation

- A major area of cooperation is *defence*, with recent discussions focusing on:
 - *Research and Development (R&D) collaboration*
 - *Joint manufacturing of defence equipment and technologies*
- This aligns with India's '*Make in India*' and '*Atmanirbhar Bharat*' (self-reliance in defence production) policies.

3. High-Level Bilateral Engagements

- Israeli Defence Ministry Director General Maj Gen (Res) Amir Baram visited India (22–23 July 2025) for the first time.
- He held meetings with:
 - *National Security Advisor Ajit Doval*





- *Defence Secretary* Rajesh Kumar Singh
- These interactions reinforced commitments on both sides for deeper security and technology cooperation.

4. Defence-Industrial Collaboration

- Defence-industrial ties are expanding in key areas like:
 - UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles)
 - Missile systems
 - Cybersecurity and surveillance technologies
- Israel is among the top 3 defence exporters to India.

5. Legal and Constitutional Context

- Defence cooperation is governed under:
 - *Article 73* (executive powers of the Union in international matters)
 - *Article 246 and Schedule VII* (Union List includes defence and foreign affairs)
- Such collaborations are carried out through *executive agreements*, not requiring parliamentary ratification.

6. Strategic Significance for India

- Israel is a vital partner in the *West Asian region*, helping diversify India's defence procurement.
- Shared concerns include:
 - Counter-terrorism
 - Maritime security
 - Technology-driven warfare

Definition: Strategic Partnership

A strategic partnership is a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship between countries involving cooperation in defence, economy, intelligence, technology, and geopolitics.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

- The India-Israel strategic relationship showcases India's growing emphasis on diversified, technology-intensive defence partnerships.
- It reflects *India's shift towards self-reliance, regional balance, and smart diplomacy* in West Asia.
- This topic is relevant for **GS Paper 2** (International Relations), **GS Paper 3** (Security and Defence Technology), and for **Essay** on strategic autonomy, defence manufacturing, or West Asia policy.

10. Coral Cover Decline in Lakshadweep: 24-Year Survey Highlights Climate Impact

Key Points for UPSC Civil Services Exam:

1. **50% Decline in Coral Cover in Lakshadweep:**



- A **24-year-long coral reef monitoring programme** (1998–2022) in the Lakshadweep archipelago revealed a **50% reduction in coral cover**, from **37.24% in 1998 to 19.6%**.
- This decline is attributed to **repeated marine heatwaves**, primarily driven by **climate change** and **ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation)** events in 1998, 2010, and 2016.

2. Role of Local Environmental Conditions:

- Despite the broad trend, the study found that **local factors** like **wave exposure** and **depth of reef locations** influence coral resilience and recovery.
- The research highlights '**local environmental filtering**' — a concept that suggests local conditions can determine the degree of damage and speed of coral recovery.

3. Bleaching and Recovery Dynamics:

- Coral **mortality has decreased** in successive events, but **recovery rates have also slowed**, indicating cumulative stress on coral ecosystems.
- The study notes that **at least six consecutive bleaching-free years** are necessary for meaningful coral recovery.

4. Scientific Methodology and Predictive Framework:

- The findings, published in *Diversity and Distributions* journal, propose a **predictive framework** to identify **vulnerable vs. resilient reefs**.
- Researchers from the **Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF)** monitored coral reefs at **Agatti, Kadmat, and Kavaratti atolls**.

5. Broader Environmental Implications:

- Coral reefs are critical to **marine biodiversity, fisheries, and coastal protection**. Their decline affects **food security, livelihoods, and climate regulation** in coastal areas.
- Coral bleaching is a **visible marker of oceanic ecosystem stress** due to **rising sea surface temperatures** linked with **global warming**.



6. Relevant Legal and Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 48A**: Directs the State to protect and improve the environment.
- **Article 51A(g)**: Fundamental duty of every citizen to protect natural environment.
- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**: Enables central government to take measures to protect and improve environmental quality.
- India is a party to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and the **UNFCCC**, both of which obligate coral reef protection.

**Definitions:**

- **Coral Bleaching:** A stress response where corals expel the symbiotic algae (zooxanthellae) due to high water temperatures, causing the coral to turn white and potentially die.
- **Marine Heatwaves:** Periods of abnormally high sea surface temperatures that can lead to mass coral bleaching.
- **ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation):** A climate pattern involving temperature fluctuations in the Pacific Ocean, with global climatic effects including marine stress.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance:

This study is a crucial warning about the **long-term impact of climate change on fragile marine ecosystems**, such as coral reefs. It emphasizes the need for **climate-resilient conservation strategies**, **restoration of degraded reefs**, and **localized environmental monitoring**. For UPSC, this topic is highly relevant under:

- **GS Paper 3:** Environment and Ecology – Climate change, conservation, marine biodiversity.
- **GS Paper 1:** Geography – Ocean currents, ENSO, coral reef ecosystems.
- **Essay/GS Paper 2:** Issues of environmental governance and policy-making.

Takeaway: Effective climate action must now integrate **local ecological insights** to design adaptive strategies for India's **coastal and island biodiversity hotspots**.

II. Fault Lines in India's Electoral Architecture: Electoral Roll Controversy and Migrant Disenfranchisement

Key Summary:

1. Electoral Roll Revision and Allegations of Bias

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is conducting a **Special Intensive Revision** of electoral rolls in Bihar (2025), leading to large-scale **deletion of names** — over **1.2 million** deleted, especially for “**non-residency**.”
- Critics allege **disenfranchisement of migrants, minorities, and the poor**, while supporters emphasize maintaining roll integrity.

2. Mismatch Between Law and Socio-Economic Realities

- The **Representation of the People Act, 1950**, assumes a largely **sedentary population**, whereas **over 450 million Indians (37%) are internal migrants** today.
- In Bihar, 36% of households report at least one migrant; districts like Gopalganj and Sitamarhi saw **5–7% voter deletions** due to migration.





3. Citizenship vs. Residency: Key Conceptual Confusion

- **Citizenship** is a legal status under the **Constitution (Part II, Articles 5–11)** and **Citizenship Act, 1955**.
- **Residency**, defined by the **Representation of the People Act, 1950**, determines voting eligibility in a **specific constituency**. This disjunction leads to **structural disenfranchisement** of mobile populations.

4. ECI's Limited Role and Administrative Minimalism

- The ECI cannot **change laws**, but it has shown **rigid adherence to outdated rules**, focusing more on **procedural compliance** than on **inclusive participation**.
- Public ignorance about electoral procedures (e.g., claims and objections process) further marginalizes migrants — **less than 25% awareness among migrant voters** in Bihar.

5. Global Best Practices for Electoral Inclusion

- **USA**: Allows **absentee/mail-in voting** for millions who reside outside home precincts.
- **Philippines**: Provides **absentee voting for overseas workers**, with over **60% turnout**.
- **Australia**: Uses **mobile polling booths** to reach remote or transient populations, achieving over **90% voter participation**.

6. Need for Electoral Reforms and ECI Advocacy

- The ECI must **advocate legislative reform** and **pilot alternative enrolment models** under its authority.
- Political parties must move beyond rhetoric and **support voter education** and **procedural assistance**, especially for **economically vulnerable and mobile populations**.

Key Definitions:

- **Electoral Roll**: A list of all eligible citizens who are entitled to vote in elections in a constituency.
- **Ordinary Residence**: As per Section 19 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, a person is entitled to be registered where they "ordinarily reside," not where they hold citizenship alone.
- **Internal Migration**: Movement of people within a country, often for employment or livelihood, leading to challenges in accessing public services like voting.

Legal and Constitutional Provisions:

- **Representation of the People Act, 1950**: Governs electoral roll preparation and criteria for voter inclusion.
- **Constitutional Articles**:
 - **Article 326**: Elections to the House of the People and to State Legislative Assemblies to be based on adult suffrage.
 - **Article 324**: Vests the ECI with power to conduct and supervise elections.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance



India's electoral framework, rooted in a **post-colonial sedentary society**, fails to represent the realities of a **mobile population**. The **disenfranchisement of internal migrants**, particularly in states like Bihar, reveals deep **structural flaws** in the electoral system. There is a **pressing need for reform** to ensure **universal adult franchise**, especially in the era of **mass internal migration**.

UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper 2** – Polity: Electoral reforms, role of ECI, Representation of the People Act, constitutional safeguards.
- **GS Paper 1** – Indian Society: Migration trends and their socio-political impact.
- **Essay Paper** – Topics on **Democracy, Inclusivity, Electoral Justice**.
- **Ethics (GS Paper 4)** – Responsibility of institutions towards marginalized citizens.

Takeaway: The **right to vote must evolve** with society's changing dynamics. **Electoral justice** demands not just clean rolls, but **inclusive democracy**.

12. India at UNSC Reaffirms Support to Palestine and Calls for Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza

Key Highlights of India's Stand at the UNSC

- **Call for Ceasefire and Humanitarian Relief**
At the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) open debate on the Middle East, India called for an *immediate ceasefire* in Gaza and the *release of all hostages*. It also flagged the worsening humanitarian crisis, citing damage to 95% of Gaza's hospitals and prolonged school closures affecting over 6.5 lakh children.
- **Stronger Shift in Diplomatic Position**
India's stance appears more assertive compared to its recent *abstention at the UN General Assembly (UNGA)* vote (June 2024) on a similar resolution. At that time, India emphasized humanitarian concerns without explicitly calling for a ceasefire.
- **Support for Two-State Solution**
India reiterated its long-standing support for a *Two-State Solution*, describing it as the only pathway to "enduring peace" between Israel and Palestine.
- **Historic Support for Palestine**
India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Parvathaneni Harish, emphasized India's "*unwavering commitment*" to the Palestinian cause, citing *historic and strong ties* with the Palestinian people.

Additional Key Points

- **Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza**
According to the UN and WHO, Gaza faces *acute shortages of food, fuel, and medicine*. Educational infrastructure is severely damaged, with no schooling for children for over 20 months.
- **UNSC Debate Chaired by Pakistan**
The quarterly debate on the 'Middle East and the Palestinian Question' was convened under Pakistan's presidency of the UNSC for July 2024.





Relevant Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution:**
Promotes international peace and security and encourages respect for international law and the settlement of international disputes by arbitration.
- **India's Foreign Policy Principles:**
 - Commitment to Non-Alignment and Strategic Autonomy
 - Respect for Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity, and Peaceful Co-existence
 - Support for multilateral diplomacy under the UN Charter

Definitions for Clarity

- **Two-State Solution:** A proposed solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict envisioning *independent States of Israel and Palestine* living side-by-side in peace and security.
- **Ceasefire:** A temporary stoppage of war or armed conflict where both sides agree to suspend aggressive actions.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

India's recent statement at the UNSC marks a diplomatic recalibration, aligning more strongly with its historical support for the Palestinian cause while balancing its strategic ties with Israel. The reaffirmation of the Two-State Solution and humanitarian emphasis reflect India's multilateral approach to global conflicts and commitment to peace.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 – International Relations**
 - India's foreign policy and diplomacy
 - India and the UN system
 - West Asia geopolitics and humanitarian concerns
 - Impact of global conflicts on India's diplomatic stance
- **GS Paper 4 – Ethics**
 - Humanitarian principles in international affairs
 - Balancing national interest and ethical diplomacy