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FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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Table of Contents

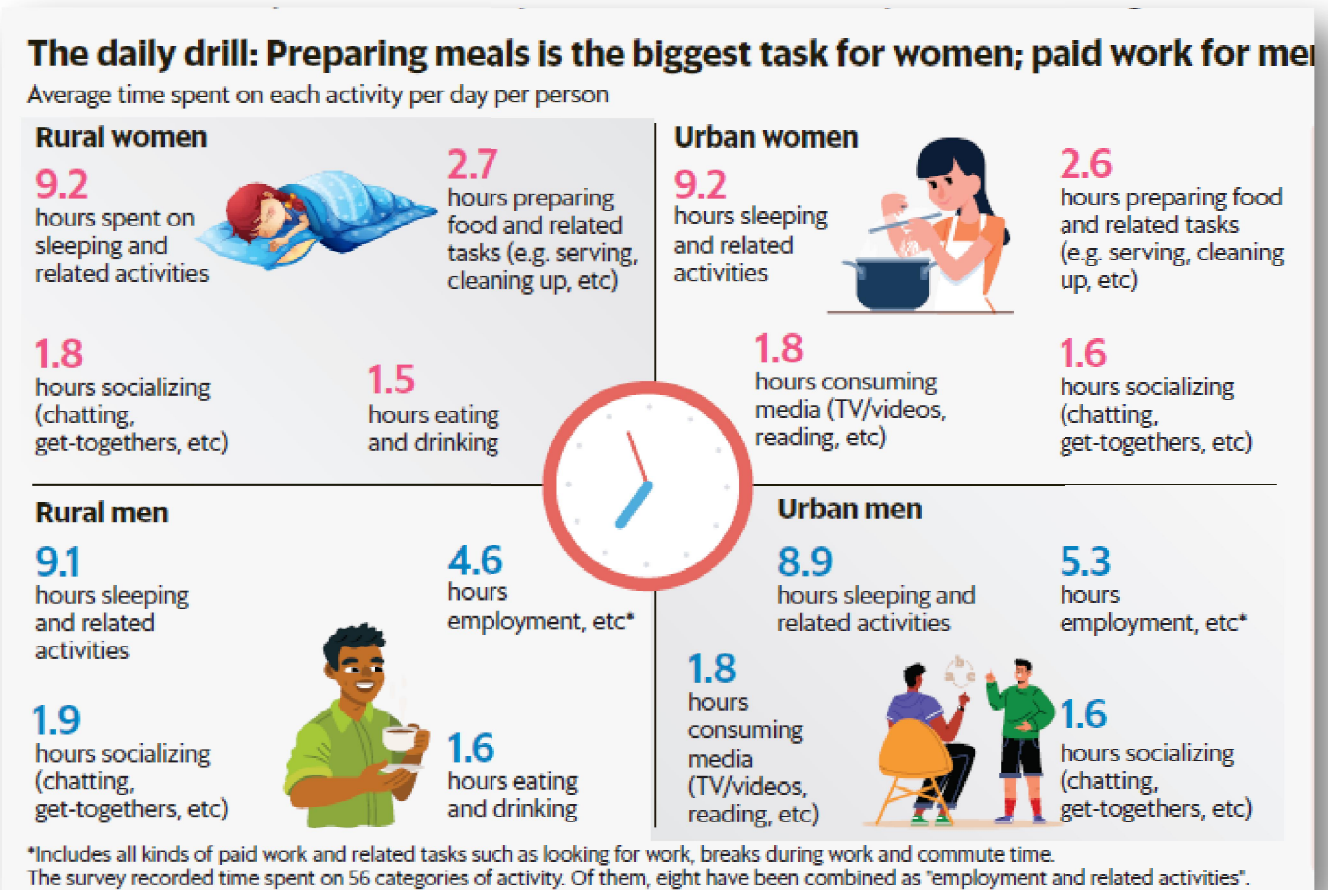
1. The Woman's Burden: Double Shift, No Break	2
2. New Renewable Projects at Border May See Tariffs Rise.....	3
3. Patent Reforms and Cheaper Drugs in India–US Trade Talks	5
4. Restoration of RoDTEP Scheme for Select Exporters	5
5. Next-Gen Telecom Technologies & R&D Boost	6
6. India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Rollout.....	7
7. India Reinforces Commitment to WHO Global Traditional Medicine Strategy	9
8. Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan.....	10
9. India's FDI Inflow in FY 2024–25	11
10. Anil Kumble Appointed as Forest and Wildlife Ambassador.....	13
11. Urban Overnutrition and NCD Crisis in India	14
12. India–Germany Strategic Partnership @ 25 Years	16
13. Southwest Monsoon 2025: Early Onset and Climate Dynamics	17



1. The Woman's Burden: Double Shift, No Break

1. Key Insight from Time Use Survey (2024):

The **Time Use Survey 2024**, conducted across 167,000+ respondents, highlights a sharp **gender divide in time allocation**. Women in India, irrespective of employment status, spend a **disproportionately high amount of time on unpaid domestic work**, especially cooking, caregiving, cleaning, and home



maintenance.

2. Gender Disparity in Labour Participation:

India's **female labour force participation rate (LFPR)** stands at **41.7%** for women (age 15+), far below the **78.8%** for men. Despite better educational attainment in recent years, women's participation in the formal workforce remains limited due to **traditional gender roles** and the **double burden** of work.

3. The 'Double Shift' Reality for Women:

Even **educated and economically well-off women** perform a '**double shift**' — engaging in both paid and unpaid labour.

- Graduate women: ~106 mins/day on paid work + 323 mins on unpaid work.



- Uneducated women: ~103 mins/day on paid work + 281 mins on unpaid work. This implies **more total work hours than men**, even though women appear less in the formal economy.

4. Men's Limited Role in Unpaid Work:

Men, across socio-economic classes, spend only **35–40 minutes/day** on unpaid domestic activities. Their formal job hours are higher (4.6 hours rural, 5.3 hours urban), but **lesser domestic responsibility** leads to lower overall work time compared to women.

5. Systemic and Structural Barriers:

Multiple factors restrict women's entry into or continuation in the workforce:

- **Gender norms**, social expectations, and **patriarchal roles**
- **Inadequate childcare support** and lack of **family-friendly policies**
- Labour market issues like **low pay**, **informal employment**, and **lack of safety**
- Claudia Goldin's work (Nobel 2023) emphasizes **motherhood and unpaid work burden** as a long-standing cause of female workforce exclusion.

Additional Constitutional and Legal Provisions:

- **Article 15(3)**: Permits the State to make special provisions for women and children.
- **Article 39(a)(d)**: Directs the State to ensure equal pay for equal work and protect health and strength of women workers.
- **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended 2017)**: Ensures paid maternity leave and childcare support.
- **The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976**: Provides for equal pay for equal work irrespective of gender.
- **The Code on Social Security, 2020**: Includes provisions for gig and unorganised sector women workers.

Definition – Double Burden / Double Shift:

- A sociological concept describing the **dual responsibility** of women engaging in **both paid employment and unpaid domestic labour**, often resulting in **higher work hours and stress levels** compared to men.

Conclusion:

The '**double shift**' burden faced by Indian women reflects deep-seated **structural gender inequality**. Despite **educational gains**, women's economic empowerment remains constrained due to **invisible unpaid labour** and lack of shared domestic responsibility. Addressing this imbalance requires **policy reforms**, **behavioural change**, **public investment in care infrastructure**, and **strong gender-sensitive laws** to foster **inclusive labour participation** and true **gender equity**.

2. New Renewable Projects at Border May See Tariffs Rise

1. Rising Tariffs Due to Increased Insurance Premiums:

Recent military tensions between India and Pakistan have led to a **threefold increase in war-related insurance premiums** for renewable energy projects near the western border. This includes key solar and wind power hubs in **Gujarat (Kutch)** and **Rajasthan (Bikaner, Barmer, Jaisalmer)**. Developers may now face an increase of **3–5 paise/unit** in tariffs due to **additional insurance and security costs**.



2. Strategic Importance of Border Regions in Renewable Energy:

Rajasthan and Gujarat receive **highest solar radiation** in India and contribute over **35% (approx. 39 GW)** of India's **105.65 GW solar capacity**. Major parks like **Khavda RE Park** in Gujarat (projected 50 GW capacity) lie **close to the international border**, making them vulnerable during conflicts, thereby increasing project risk profiles.

3. Impact on Investors and Operational Costs:

- New insurance inclusions such as **business interruption and war-risk coverage** are raising overall project costs by **1–2%**.
- **Operational risk mitigation** through enhanced **security infrastructure** and **grid stability provisions** is becoming essential to **sustain investor confidence** and avoid power disruptions.

4. Regional Diversification Recommended for Risk Mitigation:

Experts advocate **diversifying renewable project locations** to regions like **central India, Northeast, and hilly states** to reduce geopolitical risk concentration. Though **logistical and cost hurdles** exist, geographical balancing is crucial for **energy security and climate resilience**.

5. India's Renewable Energy Targets and Investment Needs:

India currently has an **installed renewable capacity of 231.81 GW** and aims to achieve **500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030**. This requires **\$200 billion in investments**, according to Nomura. Managing **regional conflict risks** is key to achieving this goal without deterring private and global investors.

Additional Key Constitutional & Legal Provisions:

- **Article 48A (Directive Principles)**: Mandates the State to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
- **Electricity Act, 2003**: Empowers promotion of renewable energy through policy and regulatory mechanisms.
- **National Renewable Energy Act (proposed)**: May institutionalize renewable energy development in line with long-term targets.
- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**: Ensures environmental clearance and safety protocols for large infrastructure and energy projects.

Key Definition – Renewable Energy Tariff:

The **tariff** is the price at which electricity is sold per unit (kWh). It includes **capital costs, operation & maintenance, insurance, land acquisition, and security costs**, among others. A small increase (e.g., 3–5 paise) can impact competitiveness in power procurement bids.

Conclusion:

India's rapid expansion in renewable energy, especially in border states like Gujarat and Rajasthan, is crucial for **energy transition**. However, **geopolitical risks** are emerging as a new cost component, demanding **policy adjustments, better insurance frameworks, and spatial diversification** of projects. Achieving national energy goals will depend not just on technology or finance, but also on **strategic resilience planning** in energy infrastructure.



3. Patent Reforms and Cheaper Drugs in India–US Trade Talks

1.Key Pharma Proposals in India–US Trade Talks

India has offered to supply **complex generics** to the US at **20–25% of branded prices** post-patent expiry; proposed **US-based manufacturing** of APIs and FDFs by Indian firms; sought **tariff exemptions** on critical US medicines imported into India; and demanded **incentives** for Indian companies investing in US drug manufacturing.

2.Patent Law Reforms and Anti-Evergreening Measures

India has proposed curbing **patent evergreening**—the practice of extending monopolies through minor modifications—by tightening **Section 3(d)** of the Indian Patents Act; also suggested **reducing patent exclusivity periods** to enable faster **generic drug entry** into the market, thereby lowering costs.

3.Significance of Indian Generics in the US Market

Nearly **50% of prescriptions in the US** are filled using **Indian-made generics**; India's role is vital as the US pushes to cut drug costs under its “**Most Favored Nation**” rule, which aims to benchmark prices to the **lowest globally**, making **India's low-cost generics** indispensable.

4.Leveraging PLI Scheme and Manufacturing Expansion

Indian pharma firms are urged to fully utilize the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme** to boost manufacturing of APIs and formulations, both **domestically and in the US**; this aligns with efforts to reduce **Chinese dependency** and improve compliance with **US FDA quality norms**.



5.Constitutional and Legal Safeguards

Under **Article 21** (Right to Life), access to affordable healthcare—including medicines—is a **constitutional right**; **Section 3(d)** of the Indian Patents Act restricts patenting of **non-significant innovations**; India is also committed to **TRIPS compliance** while opposing **TRIPS-plus** provisions that could **delay generics**.

6.Risks to Global South and Policy Sovereignty

Experts warn that concessions in patent laws under US pressure could raise **drug prices globally**, hurting **developing nations' access** to affordable treatment; maintaining India's **flexible patent regime** is critical to uphold **health equity** and **pharma sovereignty**.

Conclusion

The evolving India–US pharmaceutical trade deal presents a unique chance to enhance India's **global drug supply leadership**. However, India must tread carefully to protect its **pro-public patent laws**, uphold **domestic health priorities**, and ensure **global access to affordable medicines**, especially in the **Global South**.

4. Restoration of RoDTEP Scheme for Select Exporters

1.RoDTEP Scheme: Key Features and Objective
Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme, introduced in **January 2021**, aims to **neutralize non-creditable taxes** (like electricity duties,



The



mandi fees) that exporters incur. It is **WTO-compliant**, replaces earlier schemes deemed illegal under **WTO rules**, and uses a **digital platform** for direct transfer of benefits to exporters.

2.Reinstated Coverage for Special Export Categories

The government has restored RoDTEP benefits from **1 June** for exports made by **Advance Authorization (AA) holders**, **Export-Oriented Units (EOUs)**, and units in **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)**—after they were excluded in **February 2025**, sparking concern among exporters.

3.Constitutional and Policy Support for Exports

Promotion of exports supports the **Directive Principles of State Policy** under **Article 38** (promote welfare of the people) and **Article 39(b)** (equitable distribution of resources). Schemes like RoDTEP align with India's commitment to **inclusive growth**, **job creation**, and **foreign exchange earnings**.

4.Impact on MSMEs and Export Competitiveness

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)—which contribute nearly **45% of India's exports**—have welcomed the move. These exporters face **thin margins** and rely on duty remission for pricing stability in global markets. The reinstatement aids sectors like **textiles**, **engineering goods**, **pharmaceuticals**, and **gems & jewellery**.

5.Funding, Sectoral Reach, and Challenges

Between 2021 and March 2025, India disbursed **₹57,976 crore** under RoDTEP. For FY26, **₹18,233 crore** has been earmarked. The scheme now covers **10,780 product lines for domestic tariff area (DTA) exports** and **10,795 product lines** for AA, SEZ, and EOU exports. However, concerns remain over **timely reimbursements** and **policy consistency**.

6.Policy Stability and Trade Credibility

Experts like **Ajay Srivastava (GTRI)** argue that **frequent policy reversals**—such as temporary withdrawal of RoDTEP—undermine India's **export credibility**. Stable, long-term support for exporters is essential for **predictable pricing**, **long-term contracts**, and India's ambitions as a **global export hub**.

Conclusion

Restoring RoDTEP benefits for AA, SEZ, and EOU exporters reaffirms the government's intent to build a **competitive and equitable export ecosystem**. While the move supports **export diversification**, especially for MSMEs, long-term **policy consistency**, **efficient reimbursements**, and **broad sectoral coverage** will be critical to enhance India's **global trade credibility** and achieve **sustainable export growth**.

5. Next-Gen Telecom Technologies & R&D Boost

1.Focus of National Telecom Policy 2025–2030

The upcoming **National Telecom Policy (2025–2030)** aims to promote **cutting-edge telecom R&D** in India, with a proposed spend of **₹1,000 crore per year** (up from **₹400 crore** in FY26). Key focus areas include **5G/6G**, **quantum communications**, **blockchain**, **AI**, **IoT**, and **satellite communications**, with the objective to reduce dependence on imports and build indigenous capability.

2.Establishment of Dedicated R&D Funds

Two new funds will be set up under the policy:

- **Telecom Software Development Fund:** To promote Indian telecom software ecosystem.
- **Sovereign Patent Fund:** To build a **national**





patent pool and boost India's stake in global telecom IPR, especially targeting **10% of global 6G patents**.

3.Importance of R&D in National Telecom Goals

India currently spends only **0.64% of GDP on R&D**, much below the **global average of 2.6%** (as per Economic Survey 2025). This underinvestment limits innovation in critical sectors. The new policy aims to correct this and foster **startups, academia, and industry** participation in developing **indigenous telecom solutions**.

4.Constitutional & Legal Provisions Supporting Technological Innovation

- **Article 51A(h)**: It is the fundamental duty of citizens to develop a scientific temper, humanism, and spirit of inquiry and reform.
- **TRAI Act, 1997**: Provides the legal framework for telecom regulation and policy development.
- **Digital India Mission**: The R&D focus aligns with its objective to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

5.Implications for India's Digital Sovereignty and Economy

Boosting telecom R&D will help India **bridge the digital divide**, enhance **national cybersecurity**, and create **future-ready infrastructure**. It will also help India **compete globally in telecom standards**, reduce **foreign equipment dependence**, and build resilience in critical sectors like **quantum-secure communication** and **satellite networks**.

6.Strategic and Global Relevance

India is already among the **top six countries filing for 6G patents**. With the increasing presence of global players like **Starlink, OneWeb, and Amazon Kuiper**, developing **domestic capabilities** is crucial for **strategic autonomy** in the telecom sector. A **robust R&D ecosystem** is essential to maintain a **competitive edge** and secure **India's position in global tech leadership**.

Conclusion

The draft National Telecom Policy 2025–2030 is a strategic step towards making India a **global leader in next-gen telecom technologies**. By investing in **R&D, patents, and innovation**, the policy supports **digital self-reliance, economic growth, and national security**. However, its success will depend on **effective fund utilization, industry-academia collaboration, and long-term policy continuity**.

6. India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Rollout

1. Timeline and Status of India–UK FTA

- The **India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, whose negotiations concluded on **6 May 2024**, is expected to be **signed soon**, but **implementation will likely occur only in H2 of CY2026**, owing to parliamentary approvals and legislative processes in the UK.
- The timeline is estimated to take **at least 10 months post-signing**, similar to the UK's accession to **CPTPP**.

2. Key Features of the Proposed FTA

- **Tariff reductions** are central to the agreement:





- **Whisky imports:** Duties to reduce from **150% to 75% initially**, and gradually to **40% over 10 years**.
- **British electric vehicles (EVs):** Duties to reduce from over **100% to 10%**, **within a fixed annual import quota**.
- The FTA aims to **boost bilateral trade by £25.5 billion**, enhancing economic ties.

3. Contentious Negotiation Areas

- **Market access** for premium **alcoholic beverages and EVs** was among the **most debated issues**.
- **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM):** Although not part of the FTA text, both countries continue broader **climate cooperation**, with the UK backing India's **decarbonization goals**.

4. Constitutional & Legal Provisions Related to FTAs

- **Article 253:** Empowers Parliament to make laws for implementing **international treaties**.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Governs trade agreements, tariffs, and export-import policy.
- FTAs must pass **domestic legal and parliamentary scrutiny**, especially in democracies like the UK and India.

5. Strategic & Economic Significance for India

- Enhances **India's export potential** and investment inflows from the UK, particularly in **automobiles, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and services**.
- Offers India access to advanced UK technologies and a pathway to diversify trade partners post-Brexit.
- Complements **India's "Make in India" and export-oriented growth strategy**.

6. Challenges & Implementation Concerns

- **Delayed rollout** may affect business certainty; exporters need clarity on **effective timelines** to plan investments.
- The **quota-based tariff reduction** could **limit actual trade benefits** unless expanded.
- Concerns about **regulatory standards, rules of origin, and non-tariff barriers** remain key for implementation.

Conclusion

The India–UK FTA marks a **major step in India's global trade integration** and strengthens its bilateral ties with a key strategic partner. While it promises to **lower tariffs, boost trade volumes, and open new markets**, its full potential hinges on **timely implementation, clarity in terms, and mutual political will**. For India, ensuring that domestic industries—especially MSMEs—benefit from the deal without being overwhelmed by foreign competition will be critical.



7. India Reinforces Commitment to WHO Global Traditional Medicine Strategy

1. India's Support for WHO Global Traditional Medicine (TM) Strategy 2025–2034

- At the **78th World Health Assembly (WHA)** in Geneva, under the theme “**One World for Health**”, India reaffirmed its commitment to the **new WHO Global Traditional Medicine Strategy (2025–2034)**.
- India endorsed the strategy's focus on **integration, regulation, and evidence-based validation** of traditional systems like Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, and Siddha.

2. India's Global Leadership in Traditional Medicine

- India played a **key role in implementing the 2014–2023 WHO TM strategy** and is now actively shaping the new framework.
- **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC)** was established in **Jamnagar, Gujarat (2022)** as the first such global institution, supporting **policy development, research, data analytics, and standard-setting**.

3. Donor Agreement for ICHI Module on Traditional Medicine

- On **24 May 2025**, the **Ministry of Ayush** signed a **Donor Agreement with WHO** to develop a **Traditional Medicine module** under the **International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI)**.
- This will enable **scientific standardization** of Ayush systems and increase their **global visibility and credibility**.

4. Constitutional, Legal & Institutional Framework

- **Article 47** (Directive Principles): Mandates the State to improve public health.
- **Ministry of Ayush (2014)**: Formed to promote Indian traditional systems of medicine.
- **National Ayush Mission (NAM)**: Supports integration of AYUSH into public healthcare and infrastructure strengthening.
- **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 (as amended)**: Regulates manufacture and quality standards for Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani drugs.



5. Alignment with Global Goals and Sustainability Principles

- The new WHO strategy stresses **indigenous knowledge preservation, biodiversity conservation, and environmental sustainability**—principles echoed in India's approach.
- TM systems are being positioned as key tools in achieving **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.



6. Definitions & Concepts Relevant for UPSC

- **Traditional Medicine (TM):** Healing practices, knowledge, and beliefs incorporating plant, animal, and mineral-based medicines, spiritual therapies, and manual techniques, passed down through generations.
- **ICHI (International Classification of Health Interventions):** WHO-led classification system for standardizing health interventions globally.

Conclusion

India has emerged as a **global leader in the promotion and scientific validation of traditional medicine systems**, actively shaping international policy under WHO frameworks. Through institutions like GTMC

and new modules like **ICHI**, India is not only preserving its rich traditional heritage but also ensuring its **integration into modern healthcare systems**. This supports the larger national vision of **inclusive, affordable, and holistic health for all**, while aligning with **international health and sustainability goals**.

8. Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan

1. National-Level Agricultural Outreach Campaign

- **Launched by:** Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan on **29th May 2025** from **Puri, Odisha**.
- A **15-day campaign (29 May – 12 June)** covering **nearly 20 states** and directly engaging **1.5 crore farmers** across **65,000 villages** in **700+ districts**.
- **Objective:** To implement PM Modi's "**Lab to Land**" vision and contribute towards a **Viksit Bharat (Developed India)** by 2047.

2. Key Components and Execution

- **Organized by:** ICAR, the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare**, in collaboration with **state governments**.
- **Participants include:** All **731 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)**, **113 ICAR Institutes**, **state departments** of agriculture, animal husbandry, and fisheries, along with **progressive farmers**.
- **Total outreach force:** **2,170 teams** mobilized for field-level implementation.



3. Farmer Awareness and Capacity Building

- Educates farmers about **region-specific technologies** for **Kharif crops**, use of **Soil Health Cards**, and **balanced fertilizer application**.
- Disseminates information on **central and state-level agricultural schemes**.



- Focus on integrating **scientific research with practical field application**, making agriculture more **productive, sustainable, and technology-driven**.

4. Feedback-Driven Research and Innovation

- Scientists and agricultural officers will **collect on-ground feedback** from farmers to:
 - Recognize **farmer-led innovations**
 - Help steer **future research priorities**
 - Align extension activities with **local needs and challenges**

5. Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 48 (Directive Principles)**: Directs the state to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines.
- **Article 243G & 243ZD**: Empower **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** and **District Planning Committees** in agricultural planning and development.
- **Essential Commodities Act, 1955** and **Fertilizer Control Order** also play a role in regulating inputs promoted during such campaigns.

6. Definitions & Related Concepts

- **Lab to Land**: A policy concept aimed at translating **scientific agricultural research** into **field-level practice** for improving productivity and income.
- **Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)**: District-level agricultural science centers under ICAR to provide vocational training and extension services.

Conclusion

The **Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan** exemplifies India's shift towards **scientifically integrated and farmer-centric agriculture**, aligning with broader national visions such as **Doubling Farmers' Income** and **Viksit Bharat@2047**. It strengthens the **last-mile delivery** of knowledge and technology, fosters **participatory development**, and enhances the role of science and innovation in rural transformation—critical themes for UPSC aspirants across **GS Paper II, III, and Agriculture Optional**.

9. India's FDI Inflow in FY 2024–25

1. Record FDI Inflow and Sectoral Trends

- India recorded a **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow of USD 81.04 billion in FY 2024–25**, marking a **14% growth** from the previous fiscal.
- **Top sectors attracting FDI**:
 - **Services**: 19% share (USD 9.35 billion; +40.77% growth)
 - **Computer software & hardware**: 16%
 - **Trading**: 8%
- Manufacturing FDI also rose by **18%**, touching **USD 19.04 billion**, reflecting a shift towards India as a **global manufacturing hub**.



2. State-wise and Country-wise Distribution

- **Top FDI recipient states:**
 - **Maharashtra:** 39%
 - **Karnataka:** 13%
 - **Delhi:** 12%
- **Top investing countries:**
 - **Singapore:** 30%
 - **Mauritius:** 17%
 - **USA:** 11%
- The **number of source countries** increased from **89 (FY14)** to **112 (FY25)**, showing India's rising global appeal.

3. Long-Term FDI Growth Trajectory

- India attracted **USD 748.78 billion in FDI** from **2014–2025**, a **143% increase** over **USD 308.38 billion** in the previous 11 years (2003–2014).
- This constitutes **~70% of India's total FDI inflow (USD 1,072.36 billion)** over the last 25 years.

4. Major Policy and Regulatory Reforms

- **Liberalisation of FDI norms** across key sectors such as:
 - **Defence, Insurance, Pensions** (higher equity caps)
 - **Coal mining, Contract manufacturing, Insurance intermediaries** (100% FDI under automatic route)
- **Union Budget 2025** proposed **raising the FDI cap in insurance from 74% to 100%** for firms investing entire premiums within India.

5. Legal & Constitutional Provisions

- **FEMA, 1999** governs foreign exchange and FDI transactions in India.
- FDI policy operates under **Sectoral Caps and Entry Routes** (Automatic/Government route) issued by **DPIIT** under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry**.
- **Article 301** of the Constitution ensures **freedom of trade and commerce**, aiding the liberal investment regime.

6. Definitions and Key Concepts

- **FDI (Foreign Direct Investment):** Investment made by a foreign entity into business interests in another country, usually through equity participation.
- **Automatic Route:** FDI does not require prior approval from the Government or RBI.



- **Government Route:** Prior approval from the concerned Ministry/Department is required before investment.

Conclusion

India's consistent rise in FDI inflows, supported by a liberal and investor-friendly policy framework, highlights its **resilience, economic stability**, and growing stature as a **global investment destination**. With strategic sectoral reforms and proactive governance, India continues progressing toward **self-reliance (Aatmanirbhar Bharat)** and achieving **\$5 trillion economy goals**—making this a highly relevant topic for **UPSC GS Paper III (Economy), Prelims (Current Affairs), and Interview**.

10. Anil Kumble Appointed as Forest and Wildlife Ambassador

1. Appointment of Anil Kumble as Ambassador

- Former Indian cricketer **Anil Kumble** has been nominated as the **Forest and Wildlife Ambassador** by the **Forest, Biology, and Environment Ministry** of Karnataka.
- He will **promote awareness on forest conservation, wildlife protection, and sustainable environmental practices**.



2. Role and Relevance of the Ambassador

- Kumble, known for his global stature and clean image, will help in **amplifying conservation messages** to the public.
- He has **agreed to serve without any remuneration**, emphasizing his **personal commitment to wildlife causes**.

3. Importance for Environmental Governance

- The appointment reflects the trend of involving **public figures and civil society in environmental governance and policy outreach**.
- Such symbolic leadership roles help enhance **public participation and behavioral change**, aligning with **Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration (1992)** which emphasizes access to information and public participation in environmental matters.

4. Legal & Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 48A** (Directive Principles of State Policy): Mandates the State to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
- **Article 51A(g)** (Fundamental Duties): It is the duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and **Forest Conservation Act, 1980** are key legislations in this domain.



5. Significance for UPSC Preparation

- This topic aligns with **GS Paper III (Environment, Ecology, Conservation)** and **GS Paper II (Governance – role of civil society and personalities in awareness campaigns)**.
- It is also relevant for **Prelims (Current Affairs, Environmental Acts)** and **Essay/Interview** on environmental ethics and conservation leadership.

6. Definitions and Concepts

- **Forest Conservation:** Sustainable management of forest resources to maintain ecological balance and biodiversity.
- **Wildlife Conservation:** Protection of species and their habitats to prevent extinction and ecosystem imbalance.
- **Environmental Ambassador:** A public figure appointed to advocate and educate people about environmental issues and solutions.

Conclusion

Anil Kumble's nomination as Forest and Wildlife Ambassador is a **symbolic yet impactful step** towards enhancing **community involvement** in ecological protection. It exemplifies the role of **celebrity influence in behavioral change** and supports India's commitment to **SDG-15 (Life on Land)** and constitutional obligations for environmental protection.

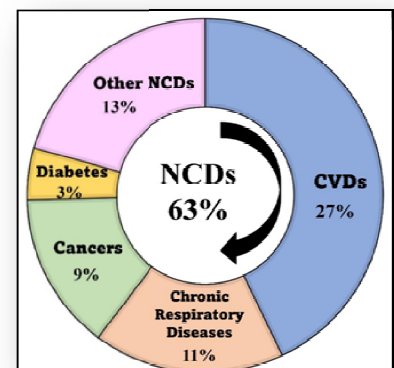
11. Urban Overnutrition and NCD Crisis in India

1. Emerging Urban Health Crisis: Overnutrition and MAFLD

- A **Nature journal study** found that **84% of IT workers in Hyderabad** have **Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Fatty Liver Disease (MAFLD)** and **71% are obese**—symptomatic of a larger urban health crisis.
- The rise is driven by **sedentary lifestyles, poor dietary habits, disrupted sleep, and chronic stress**, especially in technology hubs like Bengaluru, Pune, and Chennai.

2. Double Burden of Malnutrition in India

- India faces a **"double burden"**—**undernutrition** in rural and vulnerable areas, and **overnutrition/obesity** in urban settings.
- **NFHS-5** and **Global Hunger Index** rankings reflect this nutritional paradox.
- Obesity rates rise with **age and income**, affecting both **genders** and across **urban-rural divide**.



3. Legal, Constitutional, and Policy Framework

- **Article 47 (DPSP):** Directs the State to raise nutrition levels and improve public health.
- **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006** empowers **FSSAI** to regulate food safety and nutrition standards.



- **Eat Right India (FSSAI):** Encourages reduction in sugar, salt, and fat; promotes food labelling; and proposes the **Health Star Rating** system for packaged foods.

4. NCD Burden and Ineffective Control Mechanisms

- **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)** account for **74% of global deaths (WHO, 2019)**; in India, they are rising in the **18–59 age group**, the core workforce.
- Tamil Nadu's **STEPS Survey (2023–24)** and **MakkalaiThedi Maruthuvam (MTM)** programme reflect both the **severity** and **response** at the state level.
- However, control rates of **hypertension** and **diabetes** remain alarmingly low (<10%).

5. Market Failures and Regulatory Gaps

- India's food market is **dominated by ultra-processed, energy-dense, low-nutrition products**, driven by urban lifestyle demands.
- The **Supreme Court** has directed **FSSAI** to strengthen **labelling and food safety norms**.
- **Taxation on unhealthy food** (like Saudi Arabia's model) is proposed as a viable step to reduce consumption of HFSS foods.

6. International Best Practice: Saudi Arabia Model

- Saudi Arabia's **Vision 2030** includes:
 - **50% tax on sugary drinks,**
 - **100% tax on energy drinks,**
 - **mandatory sodium limits,**
 - **elimination of trans fats,**
 - **calorie labelling in restaurants.**
- Offers a **holistic, multi-sectoral model** for India to emulate.

Definitions & Key Terms

- **MAFLD (Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Fatty Liver Disease):** A chronic liver condition linked to obesity and insulin resistance.
- **Overnutrition:** Excessive intake of nutrients leading to overweight and obesity.
- **NCDs (Non-Communicable Diseases):** Chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, not transmitted between people.
- **Ultra-processed foods:** Industrially formulated foods high in sugar, salt, and fats, low in essential nutrients.

Conclusion

India's rapid urbanisation and economic growth have unintentionally fostered a **public health crisis rooted in overnutrition and sedentary lifestyles**. Addressing this requires a **comprehensive policy overhaul**—including **stronger food regulations, targeted taxes, and multi-sectoral collaboration**. Urban nutrition is



no longer just a lifestyle issue; it is now a **governance and policy imperative** linked directly to the **success of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and **India's demographic dividend**.

12. India–Germany Strategic Partnership @ 25 Years

1. Strategic Partnership: Origins and Core Pillars

- India and Germany are celebrating the 25th anniversary (Silver Jubilee) of their **Strategic Partnership** in 2025.
- The partnership is built on **four foundational pillars: Peace, Prosperity, People, and the Planet**.
- It includes **Intergovernmental Consultations**
- **(IGC)**, a unique mechanism that ensures regular high-level coordination between the two governments.



2. Peace and Security Cooperation

- Both nations advocate for a **rules-based international order** and peaceful global governance.
- Defence collaboration is growing through **joint military exercises** like *Tarang Shakti*, **port calls by German naval ships**, and **defence industry partnerships**.
- The Indo-Pacific is gaining geostrategic prominence in German foreign policy.

3. Prosperity and Economic Engagement

- Over **2,000 German companies** operate in India, generating more than **7.5 lakh jobs**.
- German investments in Indian infrastructure include **Delhi-Meerut RRTS** (operated by Deutsche Bahn).
- India–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is on the horizon, poised to strengthen economic ties.
- **Science and technology cooperation**, joint research, and **high-tech supply chain integration** are key features.

4. People-to-People & Educational Ties

- Germany hosts **over 50,000 Indian students** — the largest group of foreign students in German universities.
- Cultural and linguistic exchanges are growing; German language is increasingly popular in India.
- Efforts are underway to promote **reciprocity**, i.e., encouraging more Germans to study/work in India.
- Migration and talent mobility contribute to deeper societal integration and mutual understanding.



5. Planet and Green Development Partnership

- The **Indo-German Green and Sustainable Development Partnership (GSDP)** involves a €10 billion commitment by Germany over 10 years (from 2022).
- Joint efforts focus on **renewables, biodiversity, climate resilience, and smart cities**.
- German technology supports India's **energy transition**, especially in **solar and wind energy** projects.
- This aligns with **UN SDGs** and India's climate goals under the **Paris Agreement** and **Panchamrit targets**.

6. Key Legal & Constitutional Aspects Relevant to UPSC

- **Article 51(c)** of the Indian Constitution promotes respect for international law and treaty obligations.
- Germany is a major EU economy, and **India–EU strategic relations** also impact WTO negotiations, FTA discussions, and global climate diplomacy.
- This partnership reinforces **India's Act East and Indo-Pacific policies**, and complements **Germany's Indo-Pacific strategy**.

Conclusion:

The India–Germany strategic partnership, spanning 25 years, is a **mature, multidimensional relationship** that aligns national interests with **global responsibilities**. As both countries deepen cooperation in defence, trade, technology, education, and climate action, this evolving alliance offers a **model for international strategic engagement** in the 21st century. It reflects how **bilateral diplomacy can shape sustainable and equitable global growth**, making it a critical topic for UPSC aspirants to understand in the context of **international relations, diplomacy, and sustainable development**.

13. Southwest Monsoon 2025: Early Onset and Climate Dynamics

1. Early Onset of Monsoon: 2025 Highlights

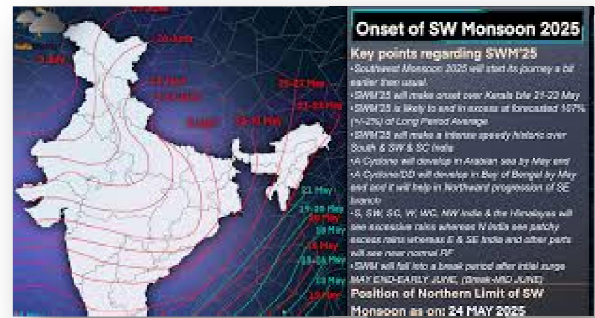
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) declared the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala on May 24, 2025, which is one week earlier than the usual June 1 onset date.
- Since 1975, the earliest recorded monsoon was on May 19, 1990.
- A similar early onset in 2009 (on May 23) resulted in a poor monsoon season, ending in a severe drought.
- Early arrival does not necessarily indicate good seasonal rainfall; however, a delayed onset often correlates with deficit rainfall.

2. Role of El Niño, La Niña, and Global Warming

- **El Niño** refers to the abnormal warming of the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, generally weakening the Indian monsoon.



- **La Niña** is the opposite phase, marked by oceanic cooling, often strengthening the monsoon.
- The 2025 season is currently forecast to be **neutral**, with some indicators suggesting a possible El Niño formation.
- The planet has already warmed by over 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels. This warming, along with complex ocean temperature anomalies, adds uncertainty to predictions.



3. Mechanism of Monsoon Onset and Influencing Factors

- The monsoon begins with the formation and movement of a trough from the northwest Pacific into the Bay of Bengal, eventually reaching Kerala.
- Late-season cyclones near the Arabian Sea can pull the trough northward, accelerating the onset.
- Conversely, Pacific typhoons may draw moisture away from the Indian Ocean, delaying the onset.
- Arctic warming and shifting wind patterns in the Arabian Sea are emerging as new variables impacting the monsoon's behavior.

4. Long-Term Trends and Regime Shifts

- Since the 1970s, there has been a gradual delay in the onset and withdrawal of the monsoon.
- This may be linked to decadal climate variability or regime shifts influenced by anthropogenic climate change.
- The exact causes remain unclear, which limits the ability to predict long-term monsoon behavior accurately.

5. Seasonal Rainfall Distribution and Withdrawal Changes

- Early onset does not ensure even rainfall distribution; intra-seasonal variability now results in more frequent floods and dry spells within the same season.
- In some parts of the country, the withdrawal of the southwest monsoon is now merging with the onset of the northeast monsoon, indicating a shift in traditional patterns.
- The unpredictability of rainfall events challenges agricultural planning and disaster preparedness.

Key Definitions

- **Monsoon Onset:** The date when sustained and widespread rainfall begins over Kerala, marking the start of the southwest monsoon.
- **Monsoon Trough:** A low-pressure area extending from the Bay of Bengal to northwest India that guides the monsoon's progress.
- **Climate Regime Shift:** A persistent and long-term change in climate behavior across a region.



- **El Niño and La Niña:** Periodic oceanic phenomena in the Pacific that influence global and Indian weather patterns.

Legal and Institutional Provisions

- **India Meteorological Department (IMD):** Under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, IMD is responsible for forecasting monsoons and issuing weather advisories.
- **National Monsoon Mission (2012):** A government initiative aimed at improving monsoon prediction models using dynamic, coupled atmosphere-ocean systems.
- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Provides a legal framework for managing disasters including floods and droughts caused by monsoon anomalies.

Conclusion

The early arrival of the southwest monsoon in 2025 is scientifically significant but not a reliable indicator of a good monsoon season. The interplay of global warming, ocean temperature anomalies, and atmospheric variability makes forecasting complex. For UPSC aspirants, understanding the science, impacts, and institutional response to monsoon behavior is crucial, especially in the context of climate change, agriculture, and disaster management.