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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY
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STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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I. Nuclear Threats by Pakistan – Key Summary

• Background & Current Issue

- Pakistan's Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, during a visit to the U.S., threatened destruction of Indian dams on the Indus if constructed, and hinted at nuclear retaliation.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) termed such statements as "Pakistan's stock-in-trade" and criticized the irresponsibility of its nuclear command and control structure.

• Nature of Remarks & Context

- Munir reportedly said, "We are a nuclear nation. If we think we are going down, we'll take half the world down with us."
- The statement was made during the U.S. Central Command change-of-command event and at a gathering of the Pakistani diaspora in Florida.
- MEA condemned remarks as nuclear "sabre-rattling" and reaffirmed India will not yield to nuclear blackmail.

• Strategic Concerns & Global Implications

- Highlights global fears about Pakistan's nuclear command integrity, especially given its military's ties with terrorist groups.
- Raises concerns about use of nuclear rhetoric for domestic and international posturing.
- Reflects instability in South Asian security environment, particularly regarding Indus Water Treaty issues.



• Constitutional & Legal Dimensions

- **Indus Waters Treaty (1960):** Governs sharing of Indus basin waters between India and Pakistan, mediated by the World Bank. India's rights allow construction of run-of-the-river projects, subject to treaty norms.
- **UN Charter & International Law:** Threats of nuclear weapon use contravene principles of peaceful settlement of disputes (Article 2(4) of UN Charter).
- **India's Nuclear Doctrine:** Based on "No First Use" (NFU) and credible minimum deterrence, contrasting with Pakistan's ambiguous first-use policy.

• Definition – Nuclear Sabre-Rattling

- The act of making aggressive or threatening statements about the potential use of nuclear weapons to intimidate or influence another state.

• Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

- Pakistan's repeated nuclear threats reflect persistent instability in India–Pakistan relations and challenge regional peace.
- For UPSC, the issue is relevant under **GS Paper-2 (International Relations)**, **GS Paper-3 (Internal Security & Disaster Management)**, and **Essay** topics on nuclear security.



- Understanding India's strategic restraint, legal rights under water treaties, and global nuclear governance norms is critical for informed analysis.

2. Impact of US Tariffs on India – Possible '1991' Moment

• Background & Current Issue

- In 2024-25, India exported goods worth \$86.5 billion to the U.S., its largest trading partner.
- New U.S. tariffs exceeding 50% will impact 67% of India's exports to the U.S. (around \$58 billion), with only pharmaceuticals and electronics exempted.
- Economic impact: Estimated 60 basis points reduction in GDP growth for 2025-26 if tariffs persist; total exports target of \$825 billion now uncertain.

• Challenges in Diversifying Exports

- Highly competitive global markets where rival countries enjoy tariff advantages.
- Requires conclusion of favourable bilateral trade agreements like India–Australia and India–UAE deals.
- Urgent need to operationalize India–UK Economic and Trade Agreement and conclude talks with Oman, Chile, Peru, New Zealand, and the EU.

• Policy Measures & Economic Options

- Rationalization of Goods and Services Tax (GST) to boost domestic consumption and offset export losses.
- Reduction in fuel prices to stimulate demand.
- Temporary pause in fiscal consolidation to increase public capital expenditure and encourage private investment.

• Structural Reforms – 'Next 1991 Moment'

- Economists suggest using the crisis to push for deep reforms in land, labour, and regulatory frameworks to enhance competitiveness.
- Deregulation and ease of doing business reforms could attract higher capital inflows.
- Comparison to 1991: Just as balance-of-payments crisis led to liberalization, current tariff shock could trigger next reform wave.

• Definition – '1991 Moment'

- Refers to the transformative economic liberalization in India during 1991 following a severe balance-of-payments crisis, leading to dismantling of the License Raj, trade liberalization, and structural reforms.

• Conclusion & UPSC Relevance





- The U.S. remains a key export market; India continues to negotiate for a mutually beneficial bilateral trade agreement, though with safeguards for sensitive sectors like agriculture.
- For UPSC, relevant under **GS Paper-3 (Indian Economy – External Sector, Growth, Reforms)**, **GS Paper-2 (International Trade & Relations)**, and **Essay** on economic reforms and globalization.
- The case highlights strategic economic diplomacy, domestic policy recalibration, and resilience in the face of global trade shocks.

3. Bihar Voter Roll Deletions and ECI Controversy – Key Summary

• Background & Current Issue

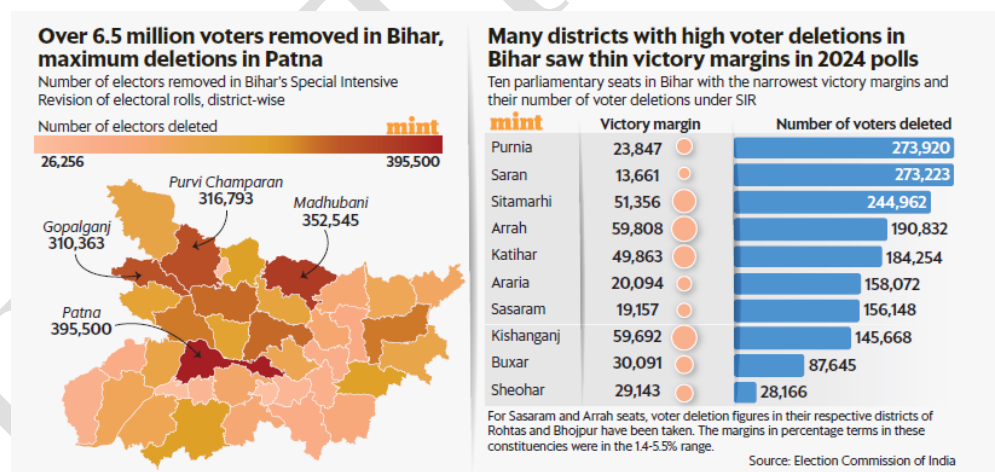
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) launched a **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of Bihar's electoral rolls ahead of assembly elections, covering ~80 million voters.
- In the first phase (completed by 1 August 2025), over **6.5 million voters (8.3%)** were removed, with Patna seeing the highest deletions (~395,500).
- Several affected districts had narrow victory margins (1.4%–5.5%) in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, raising political sensitivities.

• Concerns and Allegations

- Opposition leaders, especially Rahul Gandhi, alleged “vote theft” through duplication, fake addresses, multiple voters at a single address, invalid photos, and misuse of Form 6 for re-enrolment.
- Concerns over rushed timelines, stringent documentation, and potential disenfranchisement just before state polls.
- Civil society groups questioned lack of transparency as ECI refused to share individual names/reasons for deletions.

• ECI's Rationale & Legal Provisions

- SIR aimed to address rapid urbanisation, migration, and non-reporting of deaths.
- Usual process: **Special Summary Revision (SSR)** under the **Representation of the People Act, 1950 & 1951**, which governs preparation and revision of electoral rolls.
- **Article 324** of the Constitution empowers the ECI to supervise elections and maintain accurate voter rolls.





- ECI assured no deletions without notice; objections allowed between 1 August–1 September before final roll publication on 30 September.
- **Definition – Special Intensive Revision (SIR)**
 - A targeted, large-scale verification and correction of electoral rolls, beyond regular summary revisions, often involving door-to-door checks and stricter documentation scrutiny.
- **Electoral Significance**
 - Historical data shows ~20% of Lok Sabha seats in the last six elections were won with margins below 50,000 votes, making voter list accuracy crucial.
 - Even small-scale inaccuracies or targeted deletions can potentially influence electoral outcomes in marginal seats.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
 - The controversy underscores the **delicate balance between electoral integrity and voter inclusivity**.
 - Relevant for **GS Paper-2** (Polity: Election Commission, Electoral Reforms, Representation of People Act), **GS Paper-1** (Social Issues: Migration, Urbanisation), and **Essay** (Democracy, Electoral Integrity).
 - Highlights need for **transparent electoral roll management**, independent audits, and reforms to protect both inclusiveness and accuracy in the world's largest democracy.

4. Aarambh Libraries – Affordable & Safe Study Spaces for UPSC Aspirants

- **Background & Initiative**
 - Aarambh Libraries were launched by the Delhi government after the tragic death of three UPSC aspirants in a flooded basement library in Rajinder Nagar, exposing unsafe and cramped study conditions.
 - Underutilised **Delhi Development Authority (DDA)** community centres are being converted into modern libraries to ensure safety, comfort, and dignity for aspirants.
- **Facilities & Accessibility**
 - Monthly fee: ₹1,000 per person; capacity for **180 students daily** across three 8-hour shifts.
 - Equipped with spacious desks, large glass windows, Wi-Fi, CCTV cameras, separate washrooms, lockers, and power-equipped study tables.
 - Additional amenities include open-air gyms to promote physical well-being.
- **Locations & Expansion**
 - Three operational libraries: two in Old Rajinder Nagar & Adchini, and the latest in Dwarka.





- Expansion planned to major coaching hubs like Mukherjee Nagar and Karol Bagh in view of rising demand.
- **Social & Psychological Impact**
 - Creates a **safe and respectable environment** compared to overcrowded private libraries.
 - Encourages peer motivation, discipline, and a sense of community among aspirants from modest backgrounds.
 - Addresses issues of **financial strain, isolation, and unsafe facilities** in traditional study hubs.
- **Definition – Community Learning Infrastructure**
 - Public or semi-public spaces designed to provide affordable, accessible, and safe facilities for learning, especially for students preparing for competitive exams.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
 - Aarambh Libraries represent an example of **innovative public infrastructure reuse** to meet educational needs and ensure safety.
 - Relevant for **GS Paper-2** (Governance, Welfare Schemes, Education Infrastructure), **GS Paper-1** (Urbanisation & Social Issues), and **Essay** on education equality.
 - Demonstrates how responsive governance can enhance inclusivity, dignity, and opportunity for youth preparing for public service.

5. Tax Parity for Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) with NPS

- **Background & Key Provision:** The revised *Income Tax Bill, 2025* passed by the Lok Sabha integrates tax relief for Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) subscribers, aligning it with benefits already available under the *National Pension System (NPS)*. This move is part of the government's plan to replace the 60-year-old Income-tax Act, 1961, with simplified legislation from 1 April next year.
- **Unified Pension Scheme (Definition):** UPS is an alternative to NPS that retains employee contributions and guarantees Central Government employees a pension equal to 50% of the average basic pay of the last 12 months, after 25+ years of service. Tax benefits include exemption on 60% lump-sum withdrawal at retirement.
- **Key Tax Reforms in Revised Bill:**
 - Tax exemption on partial withdrawals and lump-sum receipts under UPS.
 - AMT (Alternate Minimum Tax) applicability for LLPs limited only to those claiming deductions; LLPs with only capital gains income are exempt.
 - Extension of *Section 80M* dividend deduction to companies under the new concessional corporate tax regime.
 - Removal of provision restricting tax refunds to only on-time return filings — refunds now allowed for belated/revised returns, aligning with current law.





- Reduction in TDS correction statement filing period from 6 years to 2 years.
- **Additional Compliance Measures:** High-earning professionals (doctors, lawyers, consultants) with annual receipts above ₹50 crore must provide prescribed e-payment facilities to clients, similar to large businesses, to widen the tax base.
- **Constitutional & Legal Basis:**
 - *Article 265:* No tax shall be levied or collected except by authority of law.
 - *Article 300A:* Protection of property rights, including pensions.
 - *Finance & Taxation Powers:* Union List, Entry 82 (Taxes on income other than agricultural income).
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:** This reform enhances parity between UPS and NPS, incentivizes pension participation, simplifies tax compliance, and widens the tax base. For UPSC, it links to topics in *Indian Economy (Tax Reforms, Fiscal Policy)*, *Polity (Legislative Process)*, and *GS Paper-3 (Inclusive Growth, Resource Mobilization)*. The alignment with constitutional provisions and focus on simplification is crucial for understanding India's evolving tax architecture.

6. India's Export Diversification Plan Post-US Tariffs – Key Summary

- **Background & Context**
 - The US, under President Donald Trump, has imposed an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods due to India's purchase of Russian oil, raising the total duty to **50%** (effective from 27 August).
 - The US is India's largest single-country export destination, accounting for **\$86.5 billion in FY25** (~20% of total exports worth \$433.56 billion).
 - High tariffs could reduce exports in key sectors (textiles, engineering goods, marine products, gems & jewellery, leather) by **up to 40%**.
- **Government's Strategic Response**
 - The Union Commerce Ministry has **shortlisted 50 priority countries** across the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Asia to absorb the shock from US tariffs.
 - These 50 nations together account for nearly **90% of India's outbound shipments**.
 - Targeted trade promotion will focus on **textiles, seafood, engineering goods, gems & jewellery, petroleum products, and chemicals**.
- **Sector-Specific Diversification Moves**

Top 5 Regions for India's Exports Over the Years

(In USD Billion)





- **Engineering goods:** Expansion towards countries like Sao Tome, Macao, Georgia, Croatia, Guinea-Bissau, Belize, Azerbaijan, Myanmar, Lithuania, Norway, Somalia, Greece.
- **Farm & processed foods:** Target Nigeria, Switzerland, Lithuania, Slovenia, Mexico, Sweden, Portugal, Cameroon, Djibouti, Latvia, Egypt, Senegal, Canada, Argentina, Brazil.
- **Garments:** Exploring UK, Australia, Canada, Middle East, and African & Latin American markets.
- **Seafood exports:** EU, Japan, South Korea, UK, Russia, Australia, West Asia, South East Asia identified as alternatives.
- **Trade Facilitation & Coordination**
 - Inter-ministerial meetings with industry bodies to identify **product-specific export opportunities**.
 - Push for **faster trade facilitation**, bilateral trade agreements, and market access strategies.
- **Key Terms & Provisions**
 - **Tariff:** A tax imposed on imported goods to protect domestic industries or penalize trade partners.
 - **Export Diversification:** Strategy to reduce dependence on a few markets by expanding to new destinations.
 - Relevant provisions: **Foreign Trade Policy 2023**, **Customs Tariff Act, 1975**, and WTO rules on non-discriminatory trade practices.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
 - The US tariff hike underscores the **vulnerability of overdependence on a single market**.
 - India's diversification plan reflects a **geoeconomic balancing act** to sustain export growth while navigating geopolitical tensions.
 - UPSC relevance: Linked to **GS-2 (International Relations, Trade Policy)**, **GS-3 (Indian Economy, External Sector)**, and **Essay topics on globalization & economic resilience**.

7. Parliament Approves Merchant Shipping Bill

- **Objective of the Bill**
 - Aims to enhance India's *bankability* and competitiveness in the global maritime sector.
 - Ensures safety and security of ships with minimal disruptions in operations.
 - Seeks to expand the eligibility criteria for ownership of merchant shipping vessels.
- **Key Provisions**
 - **Expanded Ownership Criteria** – Allows wider participation of Indian and certain foreign entities in merchant vessel ownership to promote investment.
 - **Marine Casualty Investigations** – Establishes provisions for investigation and enquiry into marine accidents to improve maritime safety standards.



- **Operational Continuity** – Minimizes disruption to ship operations during inspections and safety checks.

- **Constitutional & Legal Basis**

- **Entry 27, Union List, Seventh Schedule** – “Shipping and navigation on inland waterways and maritime shipping” comes under Union jurisdiction.
- Aligns with India’s obligations under the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** and **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** conventions.

- **Definition – Merchant Shipping**

- Refers to the commercial transport of goods and passengers by sea, excluding naval or military vessels.

- **Importance for India**

- Strengthens India’s role as a maritime hub under the **Sagarmala Project** and **Blue Economy** vision.
- Enhances investor confidence in Indian shipping, potentially increasing fleet size and reducing dependency on foreign-flagged vessels.



- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- The Merchant Shipping Bill is a crucial step toward modernizing India’s maritime legal framework, ensuring compliance with global norms, and improving safety standards.
- Relevant for UPSC under **GS-3 (Infrastructure – Ports and Shipping)**, **GS-2 (Governance & International Conventions)**, and **Economy** sections, as it connects trade facilitation, foreign investment, and maritime security.

8. China to Build Tibet Rail Link near LAC

- **Project Overview**

- China plans to construct a strategic rail link between **Hotan (Xinjiang)** and **Lhasa (Tibet)**, part of which will pass close to the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** with India.
- The project will be managed by a newly launched state-owned company, with construction expected to begin this year.

- **Strategic Significance for China**

- Enhances connectivity between politically sensitive regions of Xinjiang and Tibet.
- Strengthens China’s military logistics capabilities by enabling rapid troop and equipment movement to border areas.
- Supports economic integration and control over minority-dominated border regions.



- **Security Concerns for India**

- Proximity to LAC could increase Chinese ability to mobilize forces quickly in case of border tensions.
- May impact India's security calculus in eastern Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh sectors.
- Seen as part of China's broader strategy of infrastructure development in disputed areas.

- **Constitutional & Legal Context (India)**

- **Article 1 & First Schedule** – Defines India's territory including regions bordering Tibet.
- **Article 73 & 246** – Union's responsibility for defence and international borders.
- **Special Frontier Force** and other security measures derive from India's obligation to protect sovereignty and territorial integrity.

- **Definition – Line of Actual Control (LAC)**

- The de facto boundary between India and China, not mutually demarcated, spanning approximately 3,488 km across Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.



- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- The proposed rail link reflects China's integration of strategic infrastructure with geopolitical objectives. For India, it underscores the need to enhance its own border infrastructure and preparedness.
- Relevant for **GS-2 (India and its Neighbourhood Relations)**, **GS-3 (Internal Security, Infrastructure Development)**, and **Essay** on border management and strategic challenges.

9. Frigates Udaygiri & Himagiri Commissioning

- **Event Overview**

- The Indian Navy will commission two frontline frigates, **Udaygiri (F35)** and **Himagiri (F34)**, on **26 August** at Visakhapatnam.
- This is the first instance of **two major surface combatants** being commissioned simultaneously at Visakhapatnam, each built by prestigious Indian shipyards.

- **Strategic Importance**

- Enhances the Indian Navy's **blue-water capability** and maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Strengthens anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare, and air defence capabilities.
- Supports India's objective of **self-reliance in defence manufacturing** under the *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* initiative.





- **Indigenous Shipbuilding Achievement**

- Built in Indian shipyards, reflecting technological advancements in indigenous design and production.
- Reduces dependency on foreign suppliers, aligning with the Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020.

- **Constitutional & Legal Context**

- **Article 51(c)** – Promotion of international peace and security, indirectly linked to secure maritime borders.
- **Article 246 & Seventh Schedule (Union List, Entry 2)** – Union's exclusive power over defence and armed forces.
- **Maritime Zones of India Act, 1976** – Governs India's maritime jurisdiction where these frigates will operate.

- **Definition – Frigate**

- A **frigate** is a medium-sized warship, generally smaller than a destroyer, designed for protecting other ships, anti-submarine warfare, escort missions, and maritime patrol.

- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- The commissioning of Udaygiri and Himagiri marks a milestone in India's naval modernization and indigenous defence production capabilities.
- Relevant for **GS-3 (Security, Defence Technology, and Maritime Security)**, **GS-2 (India's Security Challenges)**, and **Essay** on self-reliance in defence and maritime power projection.

10. Banks Free to Set Minimum Balance for Savings Accounts – RBI

- **RBI's Stand on Minimum Balance:** Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra clarified that fixing the *minimum balance requirement* for savings accounts is not under RBI's regulatory control. Each bank is free to decide its own limit — some charge no minimum balance, while others have higher thresholds.
- **Recent Changes by Banks:** ICICI Bank, from 1 August, increased the *Minimum Average Balance (MAB)* for new savings accounts from ₹10,000 to ₹50,000 in metro/urban areas, ₹25,000 in semi-urban areas, and ₹10,000 in rural areas. In contrast, State Bank of India does not penalise customers for non-maintenance of minimum balance, and several public sector banks have waived this requirement for Jan Dhan accounts.
- **Definition – Minimum Average Balance (MAB):** The average balance that an account holder must maintain over a given month or quarter to avoid penalties. It is calculated by adding the daily closing balances and dividing by the number of days in the period.
- **Financial Inclusion Focus:** The Governor made these remarks during a 'Financial Inclusion Saturation Drive' in Gujarat, highlighting that opening a bank account under schemes like *Pradhan*





Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana is just the first step. Citizens should also utilise linked benefits such as accident insurance, life insurance, and the Atal Pension Scheme.

- **Digital Literacy as Key for Growth:** Malhotra stressed that in today's economy, *digital literacy* is as crucial as formal education for economic progress, especially for accessing modern banking services.
- **Constitutional & Policy Context:** Financial inclusion efforts align with *Directive Principles of State Policy* (Article 38 – promoting welfare; Article 39 – equal distribution of resources) and the right to equality in access to financial services. Banking regulation falls under the *Union List* (Entry 45 – Banking).

Conclusion: By allowing banks to decide their own minimum balance requirements, RBI promotes operational autonomy, but this can create disparities between private and public sector practices. Effective digital literacy and utilisation of inclusive schemes are crucial to ensure equitable access to banking benefits.

UPSC Relevance: Important for topics under *Indian Economy – Banking Sector Reforms, Financial Inclusion, RBI's Role, Social Welfare Schemes*; relevant for GS Paper 3 and Essay topics on inclusive growth and digital economy.

II. Axiom-4 Crop Seeds Research in Kerala – Key Summary

- **Background of the Project:** The Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) and Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) are conducting post-flight studies on crop seeds sent to the International Space Station (ISS) as part of the Axiom-4 mission. This marks a significant step in India's space-based agricultural research.
- **Seed Collection and Handling:** Over 4,000 seeds were brought back after the 18-day Axiom-4 mission, led by Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and other astronauts. IIST took possession of the seeds in July-end, initiating laboratory germination tests in its Space Biology Lab.
- **Collaborative Field Studies:** While a portion of seeds is being tested under controlled lab conditions, the majority have been transferred to KAU's College of Agriculture, Vellayani, for field studies to assess growth patterns under terrestrial agricultural environments.
- **Research Objectives:** The project aims to study the effects of microgravity and space radiation on seed viability, germination rate, plant morphology, and crop yield potential. Findings could have applications in space farming and climate-resilient agriculture on Earth.
- **Project Timeline & Scope:** The research is expected to span 2.5–3 years, combining space biology, agronomy, and biotechnology. It is among the first India-led experiments involving post-ISS agricultural analysis at scale.
- **Key Definitions & Legal/Constitutional Linkages:**
 - *Space Biology:* Study of how living organisms respond to conditions in outer space.
 - *Microgravity:* Condition in which gravity's force is significantly weaker, affecting biological processes.





- *Legal Context:* Activities align with India's obligations under the *Outer Space Treaty, 1967* and national space policy for peaceful use of space technology.
- *Constitutional Relevance:* Related to **Article 51** (promotion of international peace and scientific cooperation) and **Directive Principles** promoting scientific temper and innovation.

Conclusion: This collaborative research is a milestone for India's integration of space technology with agriculture, with implications for food security in extreme environments, including space missions and adverse Earth climates.

UPSC Relevance: Important for GS Paper-3 (Science & Technology, Space Technology, Agriculture), Prelims (Current Affairs in Space Research), and Essay topics on "Science for Sustainable Agriculture" or "Space Exploration and Human Survival".

12. Two-Language Policy in Karnataka Schools – Key Summary

- **Background of the Policy:** The Karnataka State Education Policy (SEP) Commission has recommended a two-language policy applicable to 90% of schools in the state, covering government, aided, and private Kannada- and English-medium institutions. This marks a shift from the earlier three-language formula.
- **Structure of Language Learning:** In Kannada- and English-medium schools, Kannada and English will be taught as the first and second languages. In linguistic minority schools (Urdu, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, etc.), three languages will be taught — Kannada, English, and the students' mother tongue — but the third language will be optional and excluded from examination assessment.
- **Policy Rationale & Changes:** The panel has dropped the three-language formula that included Hindi, emphasizing state language primacy and reducing examination burden. This move also ensures cultural preservation and ease of implementation in the state's education system.
- **Implementation Details:** The policy applies uniformly to all mainstream schools, with linguistic minority institutions retaining flexibility for the third language. The CBSE model's compulsory third-language assessment is not adopted in Karnataka's framework.
- **Key Definitions & Constitutional/Legal Linkages:**
 - *Two-Language Policy:* A framework where students are required to learn only two languages (usually regional/state language and English) as part of their formal curriculum.
 - *Linguistic Minority Schools:* Protected under **Article 30(1)** of the Constitution, granting minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions.
 - *Relevant Constitutional Provisions:*
 - **Article 29** – Protection of cultural and linguistic rights.
 - **Article 350A** – Instruction in mother tongue at the primary stage.
 - **Article 351** – Directive for the promotion of Hindi, which is not mandatory in state-specific policies.





- **Policy Significance:** Balances the promotion of Kannada with multilingual inclusivity, respects minority linguistic rights, and aligns with the federal principle of state autonomy in education (Seventh Schedule, List II – State List).

Conclusion: Karnataka's two-language policy reflects a shift toward promoting the state language while providing flexibility to linguistic minorities, reducing academic pressure, and asserting state control over educational language policy.

UPSC Relevance: Important for GS Paper-2 (Governance, Education Policy, Federalism, Minority Rights), GS Paper-1 (Indian Society & Culture), and Prelims (Constitutional Provisions on Language).

13. A Court Ruling with No Room for Gender Justice

1. Background and Context

- The Supreme Court in *Shivangi Bansal vs Sahib Bansal* (July 2025) endorsed the suspension of arrest/coercive action under Section 498-A IPC (now Section 85, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita) for two months after filing of complaint.
- Section 498-A was enacted in 1983 to penalise cruelty by husband or relatives, including dowry harassment, abetment to suicide, and injury to health, with up to 3 years imprisonment and fine.
- The legislative intent was to address high dowry death rates and pervasive domestic cruelty, supplementing laws like the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.

2. Key Features of the Judgment

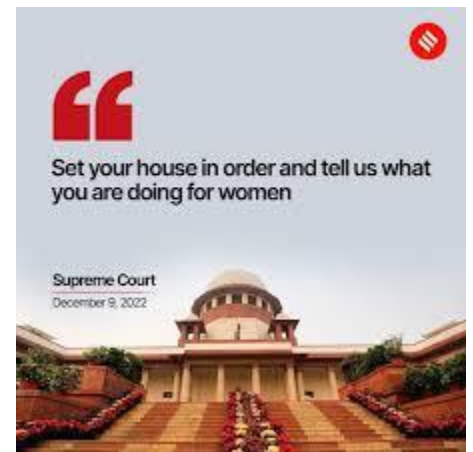
- Blanket protection from arrest for the accused for a “cool-off” period of two months from the date of complaint.
- Mandatory constitution of family welfare committees at district level to review such cases before police action.
- Decision taken in an individual matrimonial dispute without extensive socio-political analysis or hearing the state government's stand in detail.

3. Concerns Raised

- Reduces deterrence against domestic violence and makes victims more vulnerable.
- May discourage women from filing complaints due to delayed protection and police inaction.
- Undermines prompt investigation in serious crimes committed within intimate spaces.
- Legitimises delays in justice for women already disadvantaged by social and institutional biases.

4. Misuse Narrative vs Ground Reality

- The Court cited earlier cases (*Preeti Gupta 2010, Sushil Kumar Sharma 2005, Arnesh Kumar 2014*) highlighting alleged misuse of Section 498-A.
- No empirical data proving widespread misuse; NCRB conviction rate (~18%) is comparable or better than several other offences.
- Low conviction rates often due to investigative lapses, family pressure, systemic bias, and difficulty of proving domestic violence.





- NFHS-5 and NCRB data show high underreporting; increasing registered cases reflect rising awareness, not necessarily misuse.

5. Constitutional & Legal Aspects

- **Article 14** – Equality before law; selective suspension may violate uniformity in criminal justice.
- **Article 15(3)** – State's power to make special provisions for women; anti-cruelty law is such a provision.
- **Article 21** – Protection of life and personal liberty; victims' right to safety compromised.
- **Judicial Review Limits** – Legislative wisdom in enacting Section 498-A should not be overridden without comprehensive evidence.
- Court in *Sushil Kumar Sharma (2005)* held that misuse is no ground to strike down a law.

6. Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

- The ruling prioritises protection of accused over immediate safety of victims, setting a precedent that may dilute gender justice.
- It raises key debates in **Criminal Law, Gender Equality, Separation of Powers, and Judicial Activism**.
- **UPSC Relevance:** Important for GS-II (Polity, Governance, Role of Judiciary), GS-I (Society – Women's Issues), GS-IV (Ethics in Judicial Decisions), and Essay (Women Empowerment, Criminal Justice Reform).

14. Google Antitrust Case

1. Background and Context

- The case stems from a 2020 Competition Commission of India (CCI) investigation into Google's Android ecosystem practices, following complaints by app developers and industry bodies.
- In 2022, CCI found Google guilty of abusing its dominant position under **Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2002**, imposing a fine of ₹936.44 crore and issuing behavioural remedies.
- In March 2025, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) partly upheld the CCI findings but reduced the penalty to ₹216.69 crore, citing disproportionality.
- On August 8, 2025, the Supreme Court admitted appeals from Google, CCI, and the Alliance Digital India Foundation (ADIF), with hearings set for November.



2. Key Findings of the CCI

- Mandatory use of **Google Play Billing System (GPBS)** for in-app purchases, with commissions of 15–30%, excluding Google's own apps like YouTube, creating an unfair cost advantage.
- Pre-installation requirement of Google apps (Search, Chrome, YouTube, etc.) for Play Store access, reducing consumer choice and harming innovation.



- Using billing data for competitive advantage in violation of fair market practices.
- Remedies directed: decoupling payment systems from Play Store, transparency in billing, prohibition on using competitor data.

3. NCLAT's Decision

- Agreed that GPBS mandate and app bundling amounted to abuse of dominance.
- Reduced the fine from ₹936.44 crore to ₹216.69 crore, terming the original amount excessive relative to the violation.
- Struck down some remedies as overbroad or lacking evidence, but reinstated transparency and data non-misuse requirements after review.

4. Google's Defence

- Argued Android is open-source and OEMs are not compelled to install proprietary Google apps without Play Store.
- Claimed GPBS ensures transaction safety, fraud prevention, and global infrastructure access.
- Justified pre-installation as user convenience, not anti-competitive behaviour.
- Stated Indian app market remains competitive with successful local apps like Paytm and PhonePe.

5. Constitutional & Legal Aspects

- **Section 4, Competition Act, 2002** – prohibits abuse of dominant position.
- **Article 19(1)(g)** – freedom to trade; subject to reasonable restrictions in public interest, including competition regulation.
- **Consumer Protection Principles** – ensuring choice, fair pricing, and preventing monopolistic abuse.
- Judicial interpretation of “abuse of dominance” in platform-based digital markets will set precedent.

6. Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

- The case is a landmark in India's digital market regulation, balancing innovation with consumer welfare and fair competition.
- **Possible Impacts:**
 - *If CCI's order upheld:* More choice for consumers, lower developer costs, increased competition for Indian startups, but risk of Android fragmentation.
 - *If Google wins:* Status quo in app distribution and payments continues, with global implications for digital regulation.
- **UPSC Relevance:** Important for GS-II (Governance, Regulatory Bodies), GS-III (Economy – Competition Policy, Digital Economy), and Essay (Regulation of Big Tech, Digital Sovereignty).