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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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I. Why Are Private Hospitals Shunning Ayushman Bharat?

- **About Ayushman Bharat – PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY):** Launched in 2018, it is the world's largest publicly funded health insurance scheme targeting the poorest and most vulnerable households. It offers each eligible family cashless coverage up to ₹5 lakh annually for secondary and tertiary healthcare in empanelled public and private hospitals. Beneficiaries are identified mainly through the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 criteria, and over 41 crore Ayushman cards have been issued, authorising hospital admissions worth over ₹1.2 trillion.
- **Operational Mechanism:** Patients with an Ayushman Bharat card receive free treatment at empanelled hospitals, which are later reimbursed by state or central health authorities as per government-fixed package rates. Families covered under previous central/state schemes were subsumed into PMJAY to ensure wider coverage.
- **Pending Dues & National Impact:** The problem is not Haryana-specific—hospitals nationwide face delays in reimbursement. As per RTI data (Feb 2025), empanelled hospitals are owed over ₹1.21 trillion, with nearly 64 lakh unsettled claims. In 2023, official data showed 77% of all claims settled, but private hospitals still reported viability issues due to low package rates and delayed payments.
- **Haryana Crisis Example:** Over 600 private hospitals in Haryana suspended PMJAY services in August 2025 after prolonged dues clearance delays. Of the nearly ₹500 crore pending, the state government had cleared only ₹245 crore. Similar boycotts have occurred earlier in Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and other states, affecting access to affordable healthcare for beneficiaries.
- **Key Challenges:**
 1. **Delayed Payments** – Settlement of claims often takes months, straining hospital cash flows.
 2. **Low Package Rates** – Government-fixed tariffs are often below market costs, discouraging private participation.
 3. **Lack of Transparency** – Absence of real-time data on pending dues from the National Health Authority limits accountability.
 4. **Operational Disputes** – Differences between state and central health bodies on payment responsibilities slow processing.
- **Constitutional & Legal Context:** Right to Health is implicit under Article 21 (Right to Life). Directive Principles (Articles 38, 39(e), 41, 42, and 47) mandate the State to improve public health. The scheme aligns with India's commitment to Universal Health Coverage under the National Health Policy 2017 and Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being).



Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:

Ayushman Bharat is a landmark welfare initiative, but persistent financial bottlenecks threaten its sustainability and credibility. For UPSC, it is relevant under GS Paper 2 (Governance, Welfare Schemes, Issues in Implementation) and GS Paper 3 (Health Sector, Inclusive Growth). The case highlights the challenge of balancing universal access with fiscal discipline, public-private cooperation, and administrative efficiency in India's healthcare system.



2. How Tariffs Could Flip India's Export Strategy – Key Summary

• Tariffs and Export Vulnerability

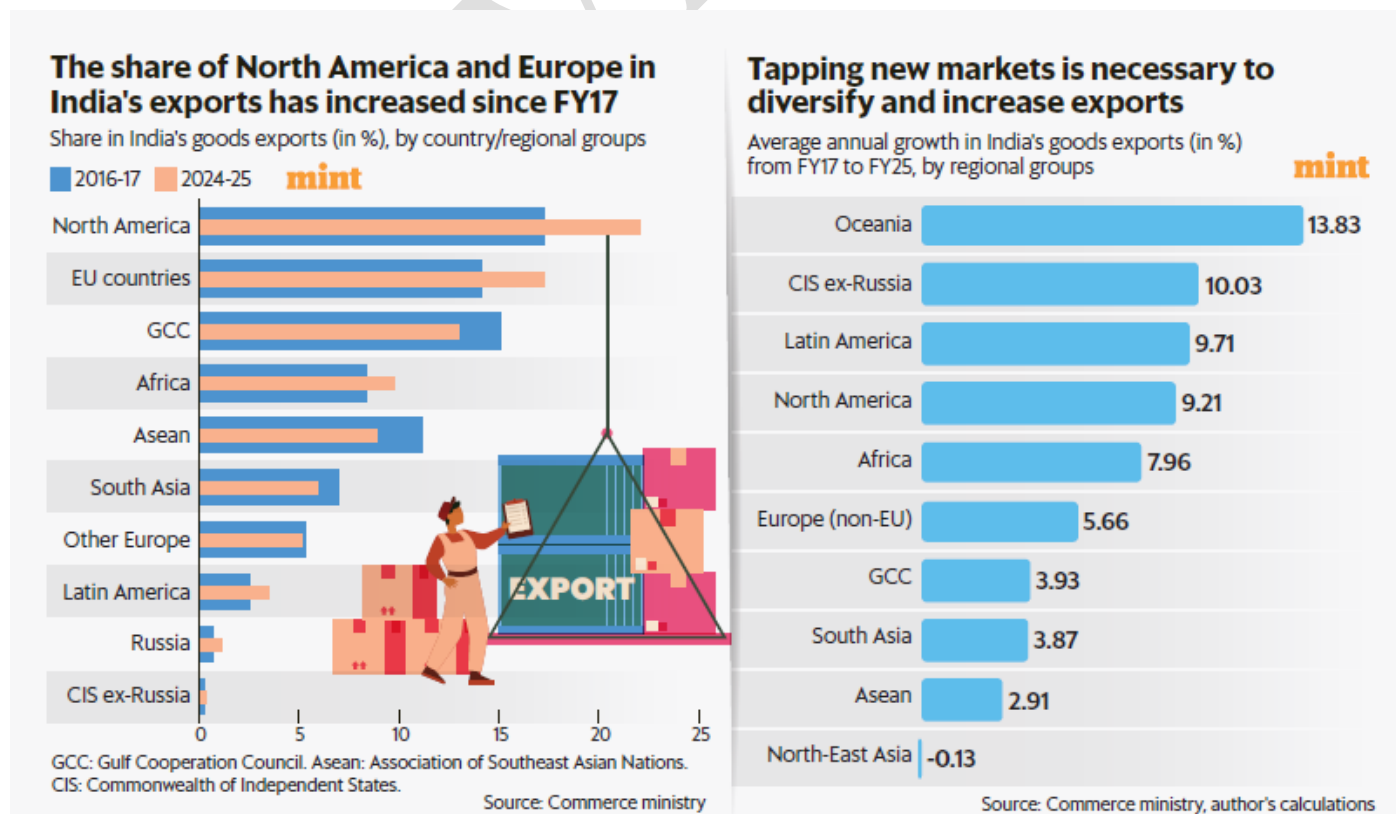
- Rising US tariffs on Indian goods (including base, penalty, and additional rates for pharmaceuticals and semiconductors) threaten exports, jobs, and investment sentiment.
- With **20% of India's merchandise exports going to the US**, India faces high exposure to US trade policy shifts, necessitating export diversification.

• Shifting Export Strategy

- Government exploring **new markets in Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe** to reduce dependence on the US.
- Export share trends (FY17–FY25):
 - **North America & Europe** already saturated with Indian exports.
 - **ASEAN & Gulf nations** provide steady demand.
 - **Africa, Latin America, CIS (ex-Russia)** show high growth potential on a low base.

• Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Realignment

- Net FDI has plunged to an all-time low in 2024–25 as US turns protectionist.
- India is now courting **“friend-shored” FDI** from nations like Vietnam and UAE to build local manufacturing hubs (e.g., Vinfast EV factory in Tamil Nadu, India–UAE shipyard collaboration).
- This strategy positions India as a **manufacturing and export hub for South Asia and Africa**.





- **Favourable Monetary and Fiscal Conditions**

- RBI's frontloaded rate cuts have created **low inflation and abundant liquidity**, boosting domestic demand to cushion weak exports.
- Bond yield differentials between India and US are rising again, improving Indian bond attractiveness.
- **Fiscal prudence** has lowered India's 10-year bond yield and given space to support exporters (₹2,250 crore export promotion mission announced; further wage or credit support may follow).

- **Key Economic Definitions & Provisions**

- **Tariff:** Tax imposed on imported or exported goods to protect domestic industries or raise revenue.
- **FDI (Foreign Direct Investment):** Investment by a foreign entity in India's productive assets (factories, joint ventures, infrastructure).
- **Friend-shoring:** Diversifying trade and investment ties with politically aligned or "friendly" nations to reduce geopolitical risk.
- **Constitutional Basis:** *Article 302* empowers Parliament to regulate trade, commerce, and tariffs in the interest of the country; *Article 265* mandates that no tax (including customs duties) shall be levied or collected without legal authority.

- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- India's export strategy is shifting from **US-centric dependence to multi-market diversification**, supported by domestic consumption, fiscal space, and friend-shored investments.
- This aligns with **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, *Foreign Trade Policy 2023*, and efforts to strengthen MSME exporters.
- Relevant for UPSC topics: *Indian Economy (External Sector)*, *FDI policy*, *Monetary-Fiscal Policy coordination*, *WTO & Tariff issues*, and *India's Trade Diplomacy*.

3. For India's Oil Refiners, the Gulf Is Calling Again

- **Shift in India's Crude Oil Strategy**

- With Russian discounts shrinking (to about \$2/barrel) and US pressure rising through **25% additional tariffs (total 50%)** on Russian energy imports, India is **reviving purchases from Gulf suppliers** such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Iraq.
- Russia's share in India's oil imports rose from **2.5% (pre-2022)** to **36% in FY25**, but high geopolitical risk is pushing India to **diversify its crude basket**.

- **Economic & Strategic Considerations**

- West Asian suppliers rarely offer discounts and often add **shipping, insurance, and price premiums**, raising landed cost for Indian refiners.



- OPEC (led by Saudi Arabia, UAE) has **5 million barrels/day spare capacity**, making it well-placed to meet India's incremental demand.
- Indian refiners like **IOC, BPCL, HPCL, Reliance, and Nayara Energy** can process both Russian Urals and West Asian crude, giving operational flexibility.

- **Geopolitical Context**

- India-US tensions over Russian oil purchases are rising; **tariffs effective from 27 August** are intended to choke Russia's oil revenues.
- India maintains that energy imports are guided by **market economics and energy security**, rejecting US tariffs as "unfair and unjustified."
- **China and India remain top buyers of Russian oil**, despite G7-imposed price caps (\$60/barrel, lowered by EU to \$47/barrel).

- **Key Economic Definitions & Provisions**

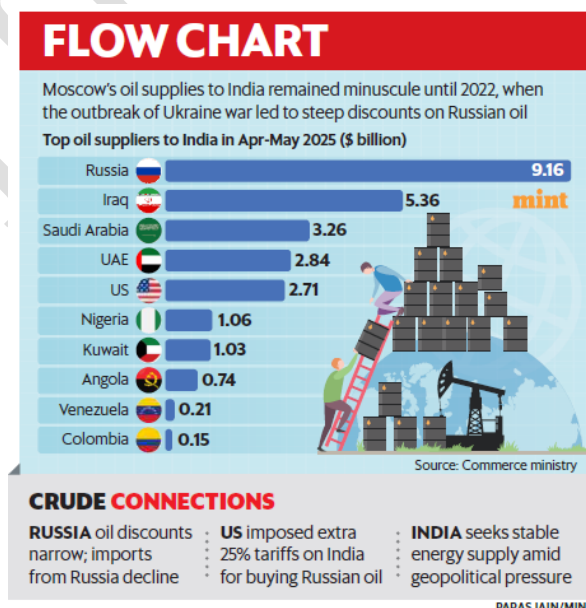
- **Energy Security:** Ensuring reliable, affordable access to energy resources to sustain economic growth.
- **Tariff:** A tax on imports or exports to regulate trade and protect domestic or strategic interests.
- **OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries):** A 13-member intergovernmental oil cartel coordinating petroleum policies to stabilize markets.
- **Constitutional Basis:** *Article 302* empowers Parliament to regulate foreign trade; *Article 265* mandates no tax or duty can be levied without legal authority.

- **Opportunity for Diversification**

- India can **reopen oil sourcing to multiple global suppliers**, fostering competition and better supply terms.
- Gulf oil's reliability and proximity may offset higher costs compared to discounted Russian crude, providing a **balanced crude import portfolio**.

- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- India's crude oil strategy is moving toward **multi-source diversification** to counter geopolitical risks, tariffs, and pricing volatility.
- Relevant for UPSC topics: *External Sector of Economy, India's Energy Security, India-US Relations, West Asia Geopolitics, OPEC policies, and Atmanirbhar Bharat in Energy.*
- The case demonstrates how **global sanctions, tariffs, and price caps impact India's energy diplomacy and strategic autonomy**.





4. Cooling Food Prices Push Inflation Below RBI Target

- **Record Low Retail Inflation**

- India's **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** inflation fell to **1.55% in July 2025**, its slowest pace in eight years and below the **RBI's target band of 2–4% for the fifth consecutive month**.
- The decline was led by a **1.76% fall in food prices**, the sharpest drop since 2019, aided by strong monsoon rains, good reservoir levels, and robust kharif sowing.

- **Implications for Monetary Policy and Growth**

- Low inflation gives the **RBI room to maintain a growth-supportive monetary policy** and keep interest rates steady.
- Economists expect **no immediate rate cuts** unless GDP growth slows sharply; RBI has retained **FY26 GDP growth projection at 6.5%**.

- **Risks to Farmers and Rural Economy**

- Falling food prices may **reduce farm incomes**, potentially affecting rural demand and consumption.
- Continuous monitoring of the **monsoon's spread and timing** remains critical for agricultural stability and price trends.

- **Global Factors and Oil Market Concerns**

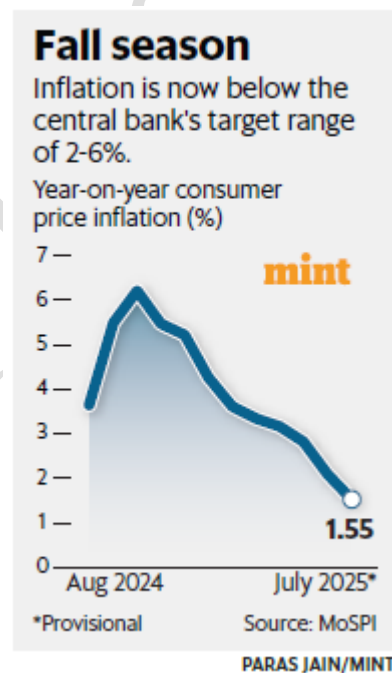
- Potential **US secondary sanctions on Russian crude** could disrupt supply chains for major importers like India and China.
- Although OPEC has spare capacity, **any global oil price spikes could offset food-led disinflation**, impacting overall CPI.

- **Key Economic Definitions & Provisions**

- **Inflation (CPI):** Rise in prices of goods and services consumed by households; CPI is India's benchmark retail inflation measure.
- **Monetary Policy Targeting:** RBI is mandated by *Section 45ZA of the RBI Act, 1934* to maintain inflation at $4\% \pm 2\%$.
- **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC):** Established under the RBI Act to decide policy rates ensuring price stability while supporting growth.

- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- India's low inflation highlights **agricultural resilience, effective monetary policy, and favorable weather conditions**.
- However, **lower rural incomes and external shocks from crude oil markets remain key risks**.
- Relevant for UPSC topics: *Inflation trends, Monetary Policy, Food Security, Rural Economy, Global Energy Dynamics, and RBI's role in price stability and growth.*





5. India's Direct Tax Collections Slip – Key Summary

• Decline in Direct Tax Mop-Up

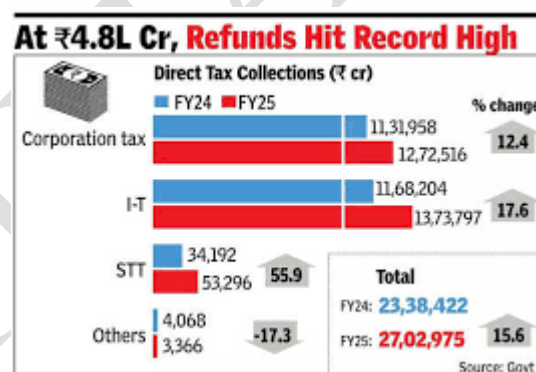
- Net direct tax collections for FY26 (till August 11) fell **3.95% to ₹6.64 trillion** (from ₹6.91 trillion YoY), despite the government's ambitious **₹25.20 trillion target**.
- The decline is due to **10% rise in refunds (₹1.35 trillion)**, delayed personal income tax filing deadline (extended to mid-September), and weak advance tax inflows.

• Segment-Wise Trends

- Personal income tax (non-corporate)** fell to **₹4.43 trillion from ₹4.83 trillion**, the largest drag on collections.
- Corporate tax collections** improved to **₹3.33 trillion from ₹3.08 trillion**, though high refunds offset gains.
- Securities transaction tax (STT)** rose modestly, while “other taxes” dropped sharply from **₹1,636 crore to ₹283 crore**.

• Macroeconomic and Fiscal Implications

- Direct taxes form the **backbone of India's fiscal capacity**, funding infrastructure, social welfare, and growth schemes.
- Weak tax receipts may challenge **capital expenditure plans**, especially amid **global trade headwinds** and **US tariff measures**.
- RBI cut **FY26 GDP forecast to 6.5% (from 6.7%)**, citing global risks.



• Key Economic Definitions & Provisions

- Direct Taxes:** Levied directly on individuals/firms (e.g., personal income tax, corporate tax).
- Advance Tax:** Prepaid tax by individuals/corporates on estimated income during a financial year.
- Article 265 of Constitution:** No tax shall be levied or collected without the authority of law.
- CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxes):** Apex body administering direct taxes under the *Income Tax Act, 1961*.

• Challenges and Outlook

- To meet FY26 target, **personal income and corporate tax collections must grow at a high double-digit pace** in the remaining months.
- Economists expect collections to improve as **base effects normalize** and compliance strengthens.

• Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

- The slip in direct tax revenues highlights **timing issues, structural factors, and fiscal vulnerability to external shocks**.



- Relevant for UPSC topics: *Public Finance, Indian Economy, Direct vs Indirect Taxation, Fiscal Policy, Global Trade Risks, and Constitutional Provisions on Taxation.*
- Sustained tax buoyancy is critical for **funding economic growth and maintaining fiscal stability** amid global uncertainties.

6. Possession of Aadhaar, PAN or Voter ID Not Proof of Citizenship

• Bombay High Court Ruling

- The court held that **documents like Aadhaar, PAN, or Voter ID do not automatically establish Indian citizenship.**
- Bail was denied to a man allegedly from Bangladesh, accused of **illegal entry and using forged identity documents** to stay in India for over a decade.

• Legal and Constitutional Context

- **Citizenship in India** is governed by *Articles 5 to 11 of the Constitution* and the *Citizenship Act, 1955*.
- **Article 11** empowers Parliament to regulate citizenship by law, overriding other documentary presumptions.
- Possession of identity documents indicates **residence or registration**, not legal citizenship status.

• Key Definitions

- **Citizenship:** Legal status granting full membership in a nation, along with political rights and duties.
- **Aadhaar:** A 12-digit identity number under the *Aadhaar Act, 2016* for residents, not limited to citizens.
- **PAN (Permanent Account Number):** Tax identity issued under the *Income Tax Act, 1961* for financial purposes.
- **Voter ID:** Issued by the Election Commission to citizens above 18 for voting, but **fraudulent issuance is possible** and does not conclusively prove citizenship.

• Implications of the Judgment

- Reinforces that **citizenship must be proved through lawful documentation and lineage**, not merely through possession of common ID cards.
- Highlights **vulnerability of identity systems to forgery** and underscores the need for robust verification mechanisms.
- Important for **illegal migration, national security, and demographic governance.**

• Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

- The ruling clarifies **legal distinctions between identity, residence, and citizenship**, aligning with constitutional provisions.

Aadhaar, PAN & Voter ID not proof of citizenship: HC

MUMBAI, 19th May

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday observed that a person does not become a citizen of India by merely possessing documents like Aadhaar Card, PAN Card and Voter ID Card. Such filing the provisions of the Citizenship Act.

Justice Anil Dorkar made the observation while rejecting the bail plea of Babu Abdul Rauf Sarfar, allegedly from Bangladesh, who had entered India illegally around 2013 and settled in Thane.

According to the police investigation, the accused had secured an Aadhaar Card, PAN Card and also a Voter ID Card, because of his residence and electricity connections, fraudulently.

"The provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955 lay down who can be a citizen of India and how citizenship can be acquired. Documents such as the Aadhaar card, PAN card and voter ID are only issued for identification or availing the services," the high court said.

The Bangladeshi man is accused of staying in India for more than a decade with fabricated documents, after having entered India illegally without a valid passport and later allegedly procuring forged Indian documents.

"Merely having documents such as the Aadhaar card, PAN card, or voter ID does not, by itself, make someone a citizen of India. These documents are meant for identification or availing services, but they do not override the basic legal requirements of citizenship as prescribed in the Citizenship Act," the court said, adding that people falling in the category of illegal migrants are barred from obtaining citizenship through most of the legal routes mentioned in the Citizenship Act.

"This distinction is important because it protects the sovereignty of the country and ensures that benefits and rights meant for citizens are not wrongfully taken by those who have no legal status to stay in India," it said.

The bench, while refusing bail to Sarfar, noted that verification of his documents was still on and the investigation was also continuing, and the police's fear that he may abscond if granted bail is a genuine apprehension.

The accused, who claims that he is an Indian citizen, was booked and charged under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Passport (Entry to India) Act and the Foreigners Order.



- Relevant for UPSC topics: *Citizenship provisions (Articles 5-11), Citizenship Act 1955, National Register of Citizens (NRC), Illegal Migration Issues, and Role of Judiciary in upholding national security.*
- This case underscores **the judiciary's role in preventing misuse of documents to claim citizenship rights unlawfully.**

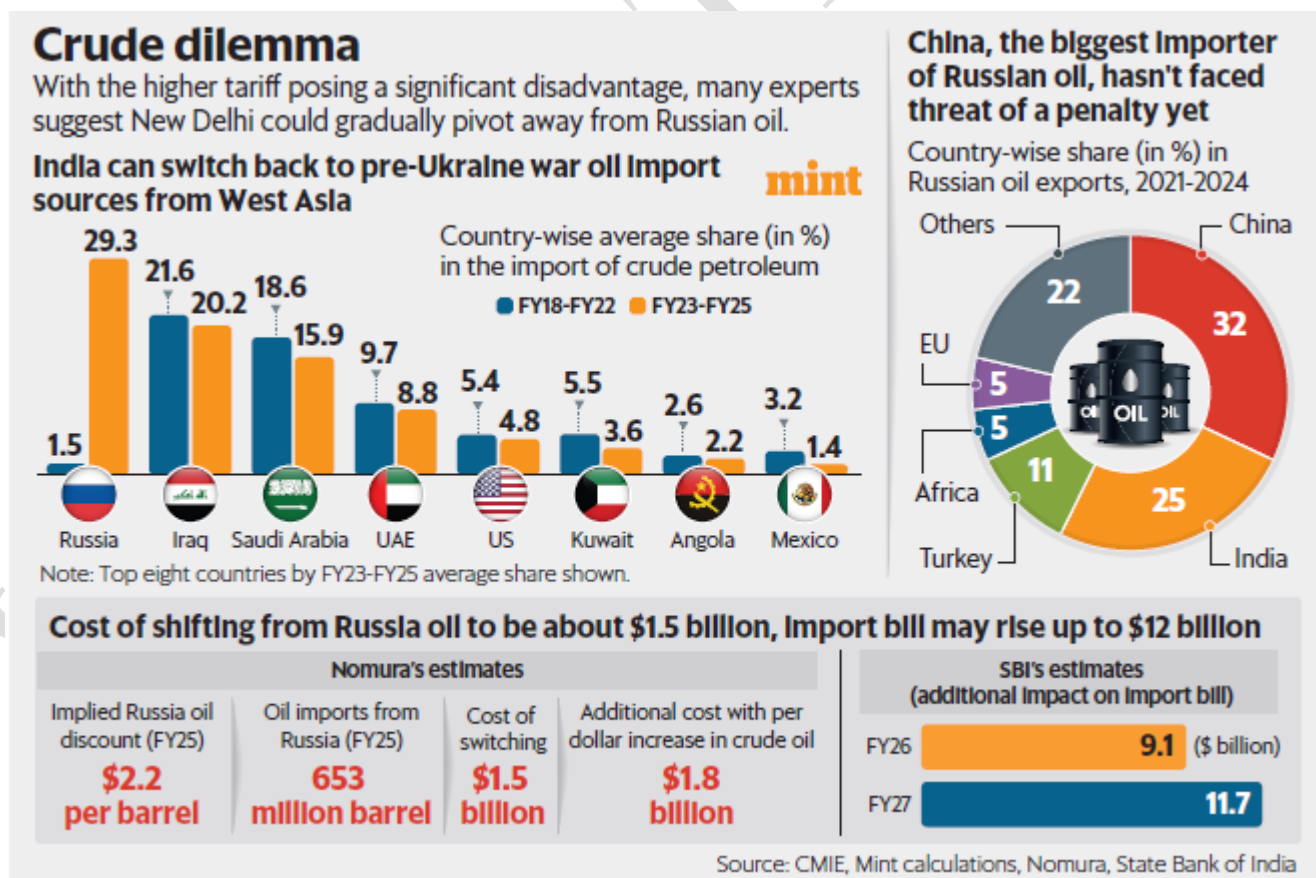
7. India Can Afford to Wean Off Russian Oil – Key Summary

• Current Context and Trade Shift

- India faces **US tariffs up to 50%** while balancing long-standing ties with Russia.
- In FY25, crude oil imports totaled **\$143 billion**, of which **\$50.2 billion came from Russia**, a jump from **1.5% share pre-2022 to major supplier post-Ukraine invasion** due to heavy discounts.

• Economic Impact of Reducing Russian Oil

- Loss of current **\$2 per barrel discount** would cost **~\$1.5 billion annually**, far less than the \$12 per barrel discount two years ago.
- **State Bank of India estimates** fuel import bill may rise by **\$9–12 billion** if Russian oil is fully replaced.



- A \$1 increase in global crude price adds **\$1.8 billion** to India's import bill.

• Alternative Supply Sources and Refinery Issues

- India can revert to traditional suppliers like **Iraq, Saudi Arabia**, and expand **US oil imports**.



- Russian crude suits Indian refineries; replacement may cause **minor diesel yield loss, tighter margins, and small throughput reduction**.
- Payment shift from UAE dirham to US dollar could pressure **Indian rupee**, though **RBI can mitigate volatility**.
- **Key Definitions & Legal Context**
 - **Tariff**: A tax imposed on imports to protect domestic industry or exert geopolitical pressure.
 - **Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR)**: India maintains reserves to buffer against supply shocks under its energy security policy.
 - **Foreign Trade Policy & FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act)**: Regulate external trade and currency flows impacting oil procurement.
- **Geopolitical and Strategic Implications**
 - Reduced reliance on Russian oil helps India **avoid secondary sanctions risk**, ensuring **geopolitical flexibility**.
 - However, **shifts in global oil dynamics** could raise prices and indirectly affect India's import bill and trade deficit.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
 - India is **economically capable of reducing Russian oil dependence** with limited macroeconomic impact.
 - Relevant for UPSC topics: *Energy Security, Balance of Payments, Geopolitics of Oil, US–India Trade Relations, RBI's Role in Exchange Rate Stability, Foreign Policy Autonomy*.
 - This situation illustrates **how trade diversification supports strategic autonomy while managing economic costs**.

8. US Designates Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) as Foreign Terrorist Organization

- **Background and Recent Developments**
 - The US State Department has designated the BLA and its Majeed Brigade as a *Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)* due to its involvement in major terror attacks in Pakistan's Balochistan province.
 - The decision coincides with **Pakistan Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir's visit to the US** and follows a **trade agreement** aimed at developing Pakistan's oil reserves and lowering tariffs.
 - The BLA, already banned in Pakistan (2024), was first designated by the US Treasury in 2019; the new designation expands global scrutiny.
- **Major Attacks Attributed to BLA**





- **Suicide bombings in Karachi and Gwadar (2024).**
- **March hijacking of the Jaffar Express** (Quetta–Peshawar) resulting in **31 deaths and over 300 hostages**.
- Continuous insurgent activity threatening **regional stability and energy infrastructure**.
- **Implications of FTO Designation**
 - **Stricter monitoring of supporters, funding channels, and operations** in the US and Europe.
 - Reflects **closer US-Pakistan counterterrorism cooperation** and acknowledgment of Pakistan's security concerns regarding Baloch insurgents.
 - Seen as part of a **broader US policy shift toward South Asia** emphasizing *military diplomacy* and *energy security*.
- **Key Definitions & Legal Framework**
 - **Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO):** Under US law (Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 219), entities engaged in terrorist activity are designated to block assets and criminalize material support.
 - **Terrorism under Indian Law:** Defined under *Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967*; similar provisions exist globally to proscribe terror outfits.
 - **International Conventions:** *UN Security Council Resolution 1373* obligates states to curb terrorism financing and cross-border safe havens.
- **Strategic and Geopolitical Context**
 - The move underscores **US interest in Pakistan's energy-rich Balochistan** and willingness to counter destabilizing insurgencies.
 - Demonstrates **deepening US-Pakistan defense and counterterrorism ties** amid regional security volatility, particularly in South Asia and Afghanistan.
 - May influence **India's counterterrorism policy**, as both nations face challenges of cross-border terrorism and insurgent groups.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
 - The designation of BLA as an FTO reflects **global counterterrorism efforts, energy security diplomacy, and geopolitical realignments in South Asia**.
 - Relevant for UPSC topics: *India's Internal Security, Cross-Border Terrorism, South Asia Geopolitics, Counterterrorism Laws (UAPA, NIA Act), US–Pakistan Relations, Energy Security in Balochistan*.
 - Highlights **how terrorism designations serve as diplomatic tools while protecting strategic energy and trade interests**.

9. Union Cabinet Approves ₹18,500-Crore Semiconductor, Infrastructure, and Metro Projects

- **Major Approvals and Investments**



- Union Cabinet cleared **₹18,500 crore worth of projects**, including **four new semiconductor units** (Odisha, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh), **Tato-II hydroelectric project (700MW)** in **Arunachal Pradesh**, and **Lucknow metro expansion** over the next five years.
- Total **semiconductor projects under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)** now stand **at 10**, with Tata Electronics' modern chip fab in Gujarat being the most advanced.

- **Details of Semiconductor Projects**

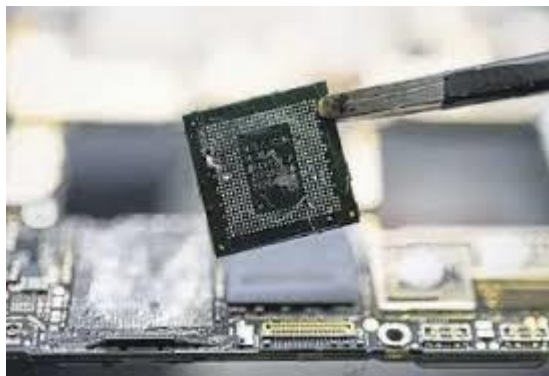
- New projects: **SiCSem Pvt. Ltd, Continental Device India Pvt. Ltd (CDIL), Heterogenous Integration Packaging Solutions (HIPL), Advanced System in Package (ASIP) Technologies.**
- Combined investment **~₹4,600 crore** and **employment generation for ~2,034 skilled professionals.**
- **SiCSem project in Odisha:** integrated compound semiconductor fabrication + chip testing & packaging.
- **HIPL in Bhubaneswar:** advanced packaging and glass substrate facility with large production capacity (69,600 substrates annually).

- **Technical Significance of Compound Semiconductors**

- Made from **silicon combined with other elements**; fabrication requires **special techniques.**
- Applications: **space launches, automotive electronics, railways, power grids, oil rigs.**
- Represents **strategic technology** for critical infrastructure and defense sectors.

- **Key Definitions & Policy Framework**

- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM):** A government initiative under *Digital India* to develop semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystems in India.
- **Compound Semiconductors:** Next-gen materials offering **higher efficiency, heat resistance, and speed** than conventional silicon semiconductors.
- **Hydroelectric Project (Tato-II):** Falls under *Electricity Act 2003* and contributes to *National Hydro Power Targets* and *Renewable Energy Goals*.



- **Strategic and Economic Implications**

- Enhances **domestic electronics manufacturing**, reducing import dependence and supporting *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.
- **Generates high-skilled jobs** and supports India's positioning in the global semiconductor supply chain.
- Hydroelectric and metro projects strengthen **sustainable infrastructure and energy security.**

- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**



- The decision reflects **India's push for advanced manufacturing, energy diversification, and infrastructure modernization.**
- Relevant for UPSC topics: *Government Policies, Make in India, Digital India, Infrastructure Development, Renewable Energy, Employment Generation, Science & Tech (Semiconductors).*
- Demonstrates **synergy between industrial policy, energy strategy, and high-tech ecosystem building** in line with India's long-term economic vision.

10. Benjamin Netanyahu's push for a no-state solution

• Shift in Global Recognition of Palestine

- UK, France, Canada, Australia, and other Global North nations are moving to recognize Palestinian statehood, departing from their earlier stance of waiting for a final peace settlement under the two-state solution.
- Historically, countries in the Global South, including India, recognized Palestinian sovereignty in the 1980s after the PLO's declaration of independence.

• Allegations of Genocide and War Crimes

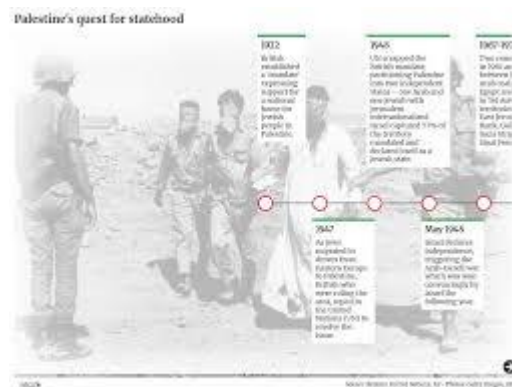
- International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant against Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu; ICJ is examining genocide charges.
- Reports by Amnesty International, Médecins Sans Frontières, B'Tselem, and Israeli intellectuals accuse the Israel Defense Forces of genocide.
- In 22 months, 2.6% of Gaza's population killed, 6.5% wounded, almost all displaced; over 18,000 children dead.

• Netanyahu's Political Calculations and Ideological Regime

- Far-right allies (Bezalel Smotrich, Itamar Ben-Gvir) press for Jewish settlements in Gaza and expulsion of Palestinians.
- Ending war or accepting ceasefire would topple Netanyahu's government and expose him to corruption trials and political reckoning.
- Netanyahu's neo-Zionist ideology aligns with a "no-state solution": denying Palestinian sovereignty and rights.

• Structural Issues and Settler Expansionism

- Settler bloc seeks "Lebensraum" (living space) by destroying Gaza and confining Palestinians to camps or expelling them.
- Israeli leaders have openly called for Gaza's total destruction and displacement of Palestinians to Rafah "humanitarian cities," criticized as concentration camps.





- **Historical Context: Shoah vs Nakba**

- Holocaust remembrance (Shoah) historically used to shield Israel from criticism, branding dissent as anti-Semitism.
- Current Gaza war, livestreamed globally, highlights systemic Palestinian suffering (Nakba), shifting international public opinion against Israel.

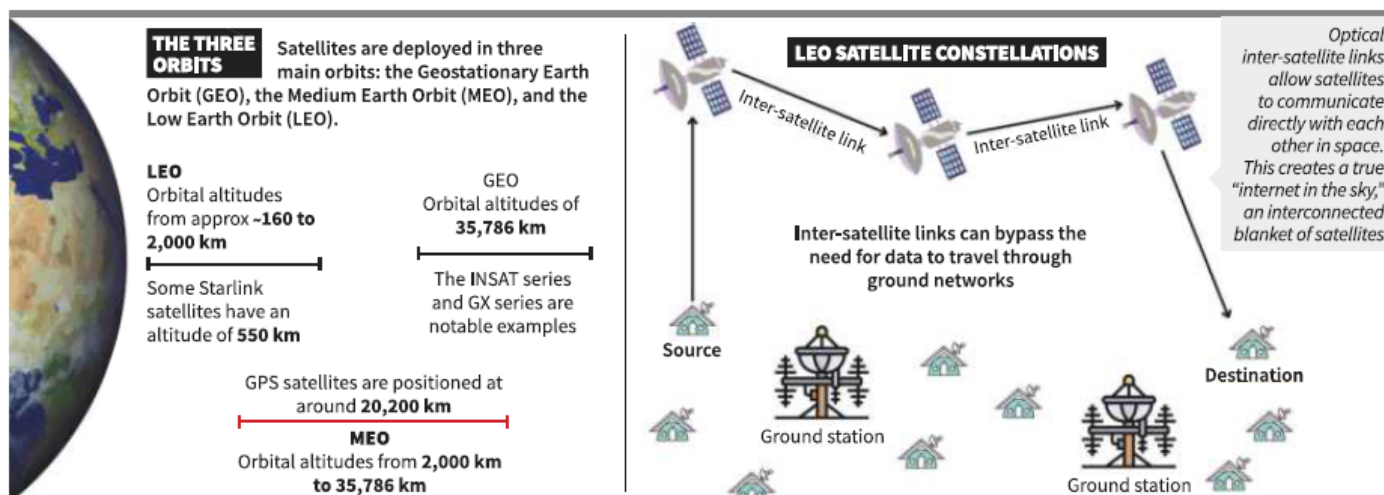
- **Conclusion and UPSC Relevance**

- **Conclusion:** Netanyahu's policies reject a two-state solution in favor of continued occupation and denial of Palestinian statehood. Growing global recognition of Palestine signals a shift in post-1948 Western consensus on Israel.
- **UPSC Relevance:**
 - **International Relations:** India's historical recognition of Palestine; shifting geopolitics in West Asia.
 - **Ethics and Human Rights:** Allegations of genocide, role of ICC and ICJ, humanitarian law.
 - **GS Paper II:** Foreign policy, international organizations, global opinion shaping.
 - **Key Terms:** *Two-state solution* (separate states for Israel and Palestine); *Nakba* (Palestinian catastrophe of 1948); *Shoah* (Holocaust); *Genocide* (systematic destruction of a people under international law).
 - **Legal Provisions:** ICC jurisdiction under Rome Statute, ICJ role in adjudicating genocide under Genocide Convention (1948).

II. Satellite Internet and Its Strategic Significance

- **Need for Satellite Internet**

- Ground-based networks (cables, towers) are costly in sparsely populated or remote areas, vulnerable to disasters, and inadequate for mobile or temporary operations.





- Satellite internet offers resilient, global coverage independent of terrain or local infrastructure, making it crucial for disaster response, military operations, and connectivity in remote regions.

- **How It Works & Types of Orbits**

- A satellite internet system consists of a **space segment** (satellites) and a **ground segment** (user terminals, gateways).
- **Orbits:**
 - **GEO (35,786 km):** Large coverage, high latency (~600 ms), unsuitable for real-time applications.
 - **MEO (2,000–35,786 km):** Moderate coverage, lower latency, still costly.
 - **LEO (<2,000 km):** Low latency (~20–40 ms), small satellites, requires mega-constellations (e.g., Starlink with 7,000+ satellites).

- **Key Features of LEO Mega-Constellations**

- Optical inter-satellite links create a true “internet in the sky” with reduced dependence on ground stations.
- On-board processing improves efficiency and reduces user terminal cost (~\$500); monthly service ~ \$50 but more expensive than terrestrial broadband.
- Continuous connectivity achieved via seamless handoff between fast-moving satellites.

- **Dual-Use Nature & Security Challenges**

- Civil applications: disaster management, healthcare (telemedicine), precision agriculture, environmental monitoring, transportation (self-driving cars), IoE, smart cities.
- Military applications: operational readiness in remote zones (e.g., Siachen), troop coordination (Ukraine war), anti-jamming drone operations.
- Security risks: illicit use by insurgents, smuggling of devices, strategic control over infrastructure becoming a form of national power.

- **Definitions & Legal/Policy Frameworks**

- **Internet of Everything (IoE):** A network connecting devices, systems, and data for intelligent decision-making.
- **National Digital Communications Policy (2018):** Aims for universal broadband connectivity in India, which satellite internet can accelerate.
- **ITU (International Telecommunication Union):** Governs global spectrum and satellite coordination; India must engage actively.
- **Spacecom Policy 2020 & Draft Indian Space Policy 2023:** Enable private participation in satellite communications.



- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- **Conclusion:** Satellite internet is a transformative, strategic technology offering global, resilient connectivity but posing dual-use security risks. India must integrate it into national resilience, bridge the digital divide, and shape international governance rules.
- **UPSC Relevance:**
 - **GS Paper II:** International cooperation, global governance of space, India's digital policies.
 - **GS Paper III:** Science and Technology, internal security implications, disaster management.
 - **Ethics:** Balancing technological innovation with security and equitable access.
 - **Key Takeaway:** Control over satellite internet will be a critical dimension of geopolitical power in the coming decades.

12. Hyphenated Nationality and the Paradox of the Nation-State

- **Meaning of Hyphenated Nationality**

- Refers to identities where ethnic or regional affiliation is combined with national identity, e.g., *Indian Bengali*, *Indian Nepali*, *Indian Muslim*.
- Such identities arise because nationality is often conflated with ethnicity, language, and territory, leading to suspicion of “divided loyalty.”

- **Structural Contradiction of Nation-States**

- The modern nation-state (rooted in the 1648 Westphalian model) equates nation = state = territory, demanding *cultural homogeneity* while relying on *diversity* for vitality.
- This paradox produces “insiders” and “others” even within the legal citizenry, as seen in the harassment of Bengali workers despite valid documents.

- **Historical and Comparative Perspective**

- Similar issues have affected Muslims, Indian Nepalis, Sri Lankan Tamils, and Northeasterners within India, and groups like Muhajirs (Pakistan), Madhesis (Nepal), and Lhotshampas (Bhutan).
- Globally, even advanced democracies (e.g., U.S. Japanese-Americans in WWII) have displayed suspicion toward hyphenated identities.

- **Legal vs. Moral Citizenship**

- **Legal citizenship:** Defined by constitutional provisions (Articles 5–11) and documents such as passports, voter ID, etc.
- **Moral citizenship:** Social acceptance grounded in cultural participation, shared history, or perceived civilisational ties.





- In practice, legal proof is often overridden by social prejudice or performative nationalism.
- **Constitutional & Policy Dimensions**
 - **Article 14:** Equality before law applies to all persons, including citizens suspected unjustly.
 - **Article 15 & 16:** Prohibit discrimination on religion, race, caste, language, or place of birth.
 - **Citizenship Act, 1955:** Governs acquisition and termination of citizenship; documents alone are not conclusive proof.
 - **Eighth Schedule recognition of languages:** Protects linguistic communities but cannot fully insulate them from bias.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
 - **Conclusion:** Hyphenated identities expose a deep paradox — nation-states seek unity yet fear diversity, creating cycles of suspicion against certain communities. Legal frameworks alone cannot resolve this without social reconciliation and inclusive nationalism.
 - **UPSC Relevance:**
 - **GS Paper I:** Post-independence consolidation, issues of regionalism and communalism.
 - **GS Paper II:** Constitutional provisions on citizenship, equality, and rights.
 - **GS Paper III:** Internal security, illegal migration concerns.
 - **Ethics:** Balancing procedural justice with dignity and social cohesion.
 - **Key Takeaway:** National belonging must integrate both legal identity and social legitimacy to overcome exclusionary narratives in a diverse democracy.

13. SC Questions Validity of BNS Section 152 (Acts Endangering Sovereignty, Unity & Integrity of India)

- **Background and Issue:** The Supreme Court questioned whether the “*potentiality of abuse*” of Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) — which penalises acts endangering India’s sovereignty, unity, and integrity — can itself justify declaring the provision unconstitutional. The case arises from an FIR against *Siddharth Varadarajan* and members of the *Foundation for Independent Journalism* over an article published on *The Wire*.
- **Petitioners’ Argument:** Senior Advocate Nitya Ramakrishnan argued that Section 152, though omitting the term “*sedition*”, is substantially similar to *Section 124A IPC (Sedition)* — vague, overbroad, and capable of chilling free speech, particularly of journalists.
- **SC Observations:** Justice Joymalya Bagchi noted that *vagueness* in a penal law is a valid ground for challenge. Referring to the **Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar (1962)** ruling, he stressed that penal action must require *proof of incitement to violence or clear threat to sovereignty*, not mere criticism or dissent. Justice Surya Kant added that political dissent alone cannot constitute a threat to sovereignty, and applicability must be judged case by case.
- **Legal Principles Involved:**
 - **Article 19(1)(a):** Guarantees freedom of speech and expression.

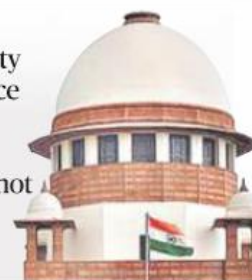


- **Article 19(2):** Permits reasonable restrictions in the interest of sovereignty, integrity, and public order.
- **Doctrine of Vagueness:** A law that is imprecise violates due process as citizens cannot reasonably know what conduct is punishable.
- **Section 152 BNS vs Section 124A IPC:** Both deal with acts against sovereignty, but Section 152 is criticised as a rebranded sedition law.



Unless there is a clear threat to unity and sovereignty, the offence [of sedition] need not be attracted... For example, mere political dissent cannot endanger sovereignty

SUPREME COURT



- **Court's Interim Protection:** The Bench protected Mr. Varadarajan and Foundation members from coercive police action and issued notice to the Union Government and Assam. It also questioned whether custodial interrogation of journalists is justified, though Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta argued journalists are not a separate legal class.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance:

This case highlights the tension between *national security laws* and *fundamental freedoms*. It revisits the constitutional validity of sedition-type provisions in light of **Kedar Nath Singh (1962)**, the doctrine of vagueness, and freedom of the press under Article 19(1)(a). For UPSC, this is significant under **Polity (Constitutional Law, Fundamental Rights), Governance (media freedom), and Criminal Law Reforms (BNS replacing IPC)**. It raises key questions about balancing *state security* with *democratic dissent* in India's evolving legal framework.

14. Govt. Refrains from Specifying Valid IDs for Citizenship

- **Background:** The Union Home Ministry informed the Lok Sabha that it has not specified any fixed categories of valid documents to prove Indian citizenship. Citizenship continues to be governed exclusively by the **Citizenship Act, 1955** and rules framed under it.
- **Provisions of Citizenship Act, 1955:** Citizenship can be acquired under **Section 3 (by birth), Section 4 (by descent), Section 5 (by registration), Section 6 (by naturalisation), and Section 7 (by incorporation of territory)**. The Act does not prescribe any single mandatory identity document for proving citizenship.
- **Electoral Roll Context:** During the *Special Intensive Revision (SIR)* of electoral rolls in Bihar, the Election Commission has allowed 11 different documents (including birth certificates) for voter registration. However, the Ministry clarified that voter ID or other identity proofs are *not conclusive evidence of citizenship*.
- **Issue of Birth & Death Registration:** A question was also raised on low coverage of birth and death certificates. The Ministry avoided giving figures for the total number of birth certificates issued in the last 25 years or naming top states with coverage gaps.
- **National Register of Citizens (NRC) Note:** The Ministry reiterated that under the Citizenship Act, the Centre is required to register every citizen and issue national identity cards, highlighting the framework for a potential NRC in future.





Conclusion and UPSC Relevance:

The government's stand underscores that *citizenship in India is determined strictly by law, not by possession of documents such as Aadhaar, PAN or voter ID*. This issue is crucial for **Polity (Citizenship provisions), Governance (documentation and NRC), and Current Affairs (citizenship verification debates)**. For UPSC, it links to constitutional provisions on citizenship, legislative powers of Parliament under **Articles 5–11**, and administrative challenges in identification and registration of citizens.

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