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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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1. Impact of U.S. 50% Tariffs on Indian Exports

- **Background of Tariffs:**

The U.S. has imposed **50% tariffs** on Indian goods (25% earlier + 25% additional penalty) effective immediately. The additional penalty was imposed citing India's **oil imports from Russia**. This move affects goods worth over **\$47 billion**, signaling a significant blow to India's export sector.

- **Exempted Sectors:**

Certain products such as **iron, steel, aluminium, passenger vehicles, semi-finished copper, and intensive copper derivative products** have been kept outside the purview of the new tariff regime. This indicates selective targeting of vulnerable Indian exports.

- **Indian Government Response:**

The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** termed the U.S. move as *"unfair, unjustified, and unreasonable"*. No official announcement has been made regarding **counter-tariffs**.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister has reiterated the **Swadeshi mantra** – **"Vocal for Local"**, emphasizing reducing dependency on foreign markets.

- **Economic & Trade Implications:**

- Indian exporters are likely to face **market loss and reduced competitiveness** in the U.S.
- Could trigger **trade diversion** towards EU, ASEAN, and Africa.
- May lead to **supply chain disruptions** and job losses in export-dependent sectors like textiles, pharmaceuticals, and IT-enabled services.

- **Legal & Constitutional Provisions:**

- Under **WTO rules (Articles I & II, MFN principle and tariff bindings)**, such unilateral tariffs are often disputed as **protectionist**. India may challenge the move at the **WTO Dispute Settlement Body**.
- As per **Article 51(c) of the Indian Constitution**, the State shall foster respect for international law and treaty obligations—providing a basis for India's WTO-aligned stance.
- India may also invoke provisions of the **Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992** to recalibrate trade policy.

- **Definition – Tariff:**

A **tariff** is a tax imposed on imported or exported goods, used as a tool for **protectionism, revenue generation, or penal action** in international trade.

Tariff travails

While the Indian government is now pushing a Swadeshi mantra to reduce the economy's reliance on exports, Indian exporters are bracing themselves for a sharp fall in business with the United States of America



Market loss:
55% of Indian exports rendered **uncompetitive** compared to neighbouring countries, warns FIEO

Sectors to be hit:
Apparel, textiles, gems

and jewellery, shrimp, carpets, and furniture

Extent of impact: Imports from these sectors could **plunge 70%**

■ India stands by its statement that these tariffs are **'unreasonable'**

■ PM Narendra Modi to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping on August 30

Conclusion

The imposition of 50% U.S. tariffs poses a serious challenge to India's export-driven sectors and bilateral trade relations. While the government is promoting *self-reliance* through "Vocal for Local", strategic trade diversification, WTO-based dispute redressal, and calibrated diplomatic negotiations will be essential to mitigate the impact.



UPSC Relevance

- **GS II (International Relations):** India-U.S. trade frictions, WTO dispute mechanisms.
- **GS III (Economy):** Impact on Indian exports, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Swadeshi mantra.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Global trade protectionism vs. multilateralism; balancing self-reliance with globalization.

2. SC on Judicial Review of Governor's Inaction on Bills – Key Summary

- **Background of the Case:**

The Supreme Court, headed by CJI B.R. Gavai, questioned why **Governor's inaction under Article 200** (withholding assent to State Bills) cannot be judicially reviewed, when even the Governor's report under **Article 356 (President's Rule)** is subject to review (S.R. Bommai case, 1994). The issue arose from a **Presidential Reference** following a petition by Tamil Nadu against its Governor for sitting on Bills since 2020.

- **Constitutional Provisions Involved:**

- **Article 200:** Governor may give assent, withhold assent, return the Bill (if not a Money Bill), or reserve it for President's consideration.
- **Article 356:** President's Rule based on Governor's report of failure of constitutional machinery in a State.
- **Article 361:** Provides immunity to the Governor from being answerable in court for official acts, but does not bar judicial review of the **validity of decisions**.
- **Article 51(c):** Promotes respect for constitutional governance and separation of powers.

- **Supreme Court's Observations:**

- If **misuse of Article 356** can be reviewed (S.R. Bommai), then arbitrary or mala fide **inaction under Article 200** should also be open to scrutiny.
- Legislative process cannot be left in **limbo indefinitely** due to gubernatorial inaction.
- CJI reminded of **Dr. Ambedkar's vision**—Centre and States functioning within their respective domains unless an internal emergency arises.

- **Centre and States' Counterarguments:**

- Governors' actions are part of the **legislative process**, not executive, hence should not be bound by judicially enforced deadlines.
- Any misconduct by Governors should be addressed by **Parliament, not judiciary**.
- Advocates argued that assent to Bills is the **culminating legislative step**, implying that judiciary should not interfere.





- **Definition – Judicial Review:**

Judicial review is the **power of courts to examine the legality of executive and legislative actions** to ensure they comply with the Constitution and are free from arbitrariness or mala fide intent.

- **Significance & Implications:**

- Ensures **federal balance** and prevents misuse of the Governor's office.
- Prevents **erosion of legislative supremacy** at the State level.
- Reinforces **constitutional morality** and accountability in governance.
- May redefine **judiciary's role in checking gubernatorial discretion** in legislative matters.

Conclusion

The debate reflects a deeper tension between **federal autonomy and gubernatorial discretion**. While Governors act as constitutional heads, indefinite delay in giving assent undermines democracy and the will of elected legislatures. Judicial review of such inaction is essential to uphold constitutional governance and prevent misuse of discretionary powers.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS II (Polity & Governance):** Separation of powers, role of Governor, Centre-State relations, judicial review.
- **GS II (Constitution):** Articles 200, 356, 361; S.R. Bommai case.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Constitutional morality, accountability of high offices, balance between democracy and discretion.

3. Quad Talks on Agenda During Modi–Ishiba Summit – Key Summary

- **Background of the Visit:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the **15th India–Japan Annual Summit** in Tokyo with Japanese PM Shigeru Ishiba. This is Modi's **first bilateral visit to Japan since 2018** and his first summit with Ishiba, who assumed office in 2024. The visit aims to strengthen strategic, economic, and technological ties.

- **Quad and Strategic Importance:**

- The **Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue)** involving India, Japan, U.S., and Australia remains an “important platform” for regional security and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
- The summit is significant despite strains in **India–U.S. trade relations** (due to 50% tariffs imposed by Washington).
- Japan and India are expected to explore ways to enhance resilience and cooperation in **supply chains, maritime security, and emerging technologies**.



- **SCO Context:**

Alongside Quad discussions, India is also preparing for the **11-nation SCO Summit** (with leaders



from Russia, Pakistan, Iran, etc.). India is pushing for a strong joint statement on **cross-border terrorism**, which has been contentious due to Pakistan's objections in earlier meetings.

- **Key Bilateral Economic Initiatives:**

- Launch of new initiatives to deepen **infrastructure, investment, and technology partnerships**.
- Inspection of **Tohoku Shinkansen plant** by both leaders, with the signing of an agreement to introduce **Japanese E-10 coaches** for the Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (Bullet Train) project by 2030.
- Strengthening industrial cooperation in **transport, energy, and high-technology sectors**.

- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions (India's Foreign Policy Context):**

- **Article 51(c), Directive Principles of State Policy:** Promotes international peace, security, and respect for international law.
- **Article 73 & 246:** Union government has exclusive power over foreign affairs and treaties.
- **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961):** Provides the framework for international summits and agreements.

- **Definition – Quad:**

The **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)** is a strategic forum of India, Japan, U.S., and Australia aimed at ensuring a **free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific**, focusing on maritime security, technology, climate action, and supply-chain resilience.

Conclusion

The Modi–Ishiba summit highlights the growing **India–Japan strategic partnership**, with Quad cooperation as a central theme amidst global uncertainties. Economic collaboration through the bullet train project and joint technological ventures signifies deepening ties. Simultaneously, India's balancing act between **Quad commitments and SCO diplomacy** underscores its role as a key power in multipolar global politics.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS II (International Relations):** Quad, India–Japan ties, SCO diplomacy.
- **GS III (Economy & Infrastructure):** High-Speed Rail, technology transfer, resilient supply chains.
- **Essay/Ethics:** India's foreign policy balancing between strategic groupings (Quad vs. SCO), promoting peace while safeguarding national interests.

4. The ECI's Ring Fence is the Constitution and the Law – Key Summary

- **Background and Recent Controversy:**

Allegations of large-scale manipulation of electoral rolls (e.g., multiple voters with same address and fictitious details in Bangalore constituency during 2024 elections) raised questions on the credibility of India's electoral system. The Election Commission of India (ECI) responded with an ultimatum to the Leader of Opposition (LoP) to submit details under affidavit or apologise, which indicated an unusual **political pushback** instead of clarifying the irregularities.

- **Constitutional Mandate of ECI:**



- **Article 324:** Grants the ECI power to superintend, direct, and control elections to Parliament, State legislatures, and the offices of President and Vice President.
- **Basic Structure Doctrine:** Free and fair elections form part of the basic structure of the Constitution; hence, ECI has a constitutional obligation to ensure them.
- **Judicial Precedent:** In *A.C. Jose v. Sivan Pillai* (1984), SC warned against **arbitrary powers** of ECI leading to political havoc.
- **Electoral Roll Management and Legal Provisions:**
 - **Representation of the People Act, 1950:** Provides framework for preparation and revision of electoral rolls (Sections 21, 14(b)).
 - **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 (Rule 25, Rule 8):** Define summary and intensive revisions of rolls.
 - **Irregularities:** The “Special Intensive Revision (SIR)” in Bihar violated the legal framework (fixing July 1 as qualifying date instead of January 1), creating chaos and deletion of 65 lakh names. SC intervened, ordering publication of names and reasons for deletion.
- **Definition – Electoral Roll:**

An **electoral roll** is the official list of eligible voters in a constituency, maintained under law, ensuring that only citizens ordinarily resident at a place are enrolled. It is the foundation of the **universal adult suffrage system** under **Article 326**.
- **Significance and Concerns:**
 - Any irregularity in voter lists undermines **people’s sovereignty and democratic legitimacy**.
 - ECI’s role is not adversarial but **neutral and corrective**, ensuring citizens’ faith in elections.
 - Allegations of manipulation highlight risks of political capture of electoral machinery.
 - Supreme Court’s intervention reflects the **judiciary’s role in safeguarding democracy** when constitutional bodies falter.



Conclusion

The ECI is a high constitutional authority, but its powers are **not unfettered**; they are circumscribed by the Constitution and law. Free and fair elections being part of the basic structure, the Commission must exercise Article 324 powers responsibly, respond to citizen complaints, and avoid political entanglement. The credibility of electoral rolls is central to democratic integrity.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS II (Polity):** Role, powers, and accountability of the Election Commission; free and fair elections; judicial review.
- **GS II (Governance):** Credibility of institutions, checks and balances, role of opposition.
- **Essay/Ethics:** Electoral integrity, neutrality of constitutional bodies, constitutional morality in a democracy.



5. The Gender Angle to India's Economic Vulnerabilities

• Impact of U.S. Tariffs on Women-Centric Industries

The proposed 50% tariffs by the U.S. on \$40 billion worth of Indian exports (textiles, gems, leather, footwear) could reduce India's GDP by 1% and shrink exports by up to 50%. These labour-intensive sectors employ millions of women, thus directly threatening female employment and economic empowerment.

• Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) and Growth Potential

India's FLFPR (37–41.7%) is far below the global average and China's 60%. The IMF estimates that closing the gender gap could boost India's GDP by 27%. Despite rural women contributing more in unpaid work, urban women face stagnation due to safety issues, lack of sanitation, transport, and care responsibilities.

• Demographic Dividend and Gender Inclusion

India's demographic dividend window (till 2045) can drive sustained growth only if women are integrated into the workforce. Lessons from China, Japan, and the U.S. show that state-backed childcare, education, part-time work models, and legal protections can significantly increase women's participation and GDP growth.

• Domestic Interventions and Policy Innovations

Successful models include Karnataka's *Shakti Scheme* (free bus travel for women, enhancing mobility and jobs), Rajasthan's *Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme* (65% women beneficiaries in urban jobs), and gig economy platforms like *Urban Company* providing income, insurance, and maternity benefits. These demonstrate how targeted support, formalisation, and digital inclusion can economically empower women.



• Structural Barriers and Constitutional-Legal Angle

Barriers include cultural constraints, unpaid care burden, lack of skilling, and weak policy support. Constitutional provisions like **Article 14 (Equality before law)**, **Article 15(3) (special provisions for women and children)**, **Article 39(d) (equal pay for equal work)**, and **Article 42 (maternity relief)** mandate gender equality. India also has obligations under **CEDAW** (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women).

• Way Forward and Strategic Imperative

Instead of short-term populism or cash transfers, India needs structural reforms — skilling, childcare, safe transport, tax incentives for women entrepreneurs, gender-sensitive labour codes, and recognition of unpaid work. Empowering women is not just social justice, but a growth imperative for export competitiveness, demographic dividend, and inclusive development.

Definition (Key Term): Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) – The percentage of women (aged 15 and above) actively engaged in the labour market, either employed or seeking work.

Conclusion

India's economic vulnerabilities are not just external (like U.S. tariffs) but also internal, stemming from underutilisation of women's economic potential. Empowering women is the linchpin of India's growth story, determining whether it emerges as a resilient global powerhouse or faces long-term fragility.

UPSC Relevance



- GS1: Role of women, population and developmental issues
- GS2: Welfare schemes, constitutional provisions for women
- GS3: Economic growth, employment, external trade vulnerabilities
- GS4: Ethics of gender justice and equity in development

6. Cooperatives at a Crossroads

- **National Cooperative Policy 2025 and Federal Concerns**

The new policy, launched by the Union Ministry of Cooperation, has drawn criticism from Kerala for being “unconstitutional” as cooperative societies fall under **Entry 32 of the State List (Seventh Schedule, Constitution)**. Kerala views this as central encroachment into its jurisdiction and a challenge to **cooperative federalism**.

- **Kerala’s Cooperative Legacy and Economic Importance**

Kerala has a long tradition of cooperatives dating back to the early 20th century, with a strong network that plays a vital role in credit supply and rural development. The cooperative sector holds deposits worth ₹2.94 lakh crore and enjoys strong grassroots support, especially among farmers.

- **Political and Economic Dimensions**

The CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front government alleges that the BJP is attempting to gain political and financial control of Kerala’s cooperative sector through central policies. Employees’ unions have echoed these concerns, claiming corporatization threatens to grassroots cooperatives.

- **Governance Challenges and Scams**

The cooperative sector in Kerala has faced credibility issues due to scams such as the **Karuvannur Service Cooperative Bank case** involving embezzlement and depositor losses. To restore confidence, Kerala amended the Cooperative Societies Act in 2023, introducing safeguards and tighter oversight.

- **Reforms and Structural Changes in Kerala**

Kerala has reorganized its cooperative credit structure by merging district-level banks with the State Cooperative Bank (Kerala Bank), reducing the three-tier system into a two-tier model. This reflects an effort to modernize and consolidate cooperative institutions.

- **Future Prospects and Transformation Needs**

With rapid urbanisation, changing youth aspirations, and emerging opportunities in energy, shipping, technology, and healthcare, cooperatives must diversify beyond their traditional rural roles. Their adaptation to these structural shifts will be crucial for Kerala’s economic resilience.



Definition (Key Term): Cooperative Federalism – A system where the Union and States work in coordination, respecting each other’s jurisdiction as defined by the Constitution, particularly in sectors like agriculture, rural credit, and cooperatives.

Constitutional-Legal Provisions

- **Entry 32, State List, Seventh Schedule:** Cooperatives are a State subject.



- **97th Constitutional Amendment (2011):** Inserted **Part IXB** on cooperatives, granting members democratic rights; but in 2021, the Supreme Court struck down parts related to State cooperatives while upholding those for Multi-State Cooperative Societies.
- **Article 43B (Directive Principle):** Promotes cooperative societies as voluntary, autonomous, democratic organisations.

Conclusion

The National Cooperative Policy 2025 highlights tensions between Centre and States over control, accountability, and financial interests in the cooperative sector. While the Centre aims to modernise and regulate, States like Kerala see it as federal overreach. The sector's future will depend on balancing **federal principles with reform needs**, ensuring transparency, and adapting cooperatives to new economic realities.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS2:** Centre-State relations, federalism, constitutional provisions, cooperative governance
- **GS3:** Role of cooperatives in rural economy, financial inclusion, economic reforms
- **GS4:** Issues of accountability, transparency, and ethics in cooperative institutions

7. ISRO's Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-1) and Gaganyaan Mission

• IADT-1 and Its Significance

On August 24, 2025, ISRO successfully conducted its first **Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-1)**, a crucial step for the **Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission**. A 4.8-tonne dummy crew capsule was dropped from an IAF Chinook helicopter at 3 km altitude to test whether the parachute-based deceleration system could safely slow the module for splashdown at around 8 m/s. This test validated safety during the riskiest phase of re-entry and landing.

• Agencies and Collaboration

The test involved multi-agency participation: ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre handled 90% of activities, **Indian Air Force** provided the helicopter, **DRDO** contributed materials and safety systems, while the **Indian Navy and Coast Guard** prepared for post-splashdown recovery. Such integration reflects India's whole-of-government approach to human spaceflight.

• Roadmap of Gaganyaan Mission

Gaganyaan aims to send Indian astronauts to low-Earth orbit using a **human-rated LVM3 rocket**. Key preparatory stages include **Crew Escape System tests (TV-D1 in 2023, TV-D2 upcoming)**, **uncrewed mission G1 with humanoid Vyommitra**, and multiple IADTs before the first human flight (H1), scheduled for 2027 (likely delayed). Each system is being tested repeatedly to meet global safety standards.

• Critical Technologies Under Development

Essential subsystems include the **Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS)** for oxygen and temperature regulation, **Integrated Vehicle Health Management System (IVHMS)** for fault detection and aborts, and a strengthened LVM3 rocket. India has indigenised critical technologies like escape motors, composites, and parachute systems, due to limited international technology transfer.





- **Long-term Human Spaceflight Goals**

Gaganyaan is only the foundation. India aims to establish the **Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS)** by 2035 and achieve a **crewed lunar landing by 2040**. Technologies like in-orbit docking (demonstrated in May 2025 through SpaDeX mission) will be crucial for these milestones, enabling extended stays and deep-space missions.

- **Constitutional & Legal Angle**

While not directly constitutional, India's space programme aligns with the **Space Activities Bill (draft, 2017)**, which seeks regulation of commercial space activities and liability norms. Further, Article 51 (Directive Principles) urges promotion of international peace and cooperation, under which space exploration is framed as part of India's global responsibility.

Definition (Key Term): Human-Rating – The process of designing, testing, and certifying space systems (rockets, modules, escape systems) to carry humans safely, involving redundancies, fault tolerance, and life support.

Conclusion

IADT-1 marks a significant step toward India's first human spaceflight, showcasing technological maturity, inter-agency coordination, and indigenisation. With Gaganyaan, India joins an elite group of nations pursuing human spaceflight, laying the foundation for space station development and lunar missions. Each successful test strengthens India's strategic autonomy in space.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS3:** Science & Technology – space technology, indigenisation, strategic autonomy
- **GS2:** Role of government agencies and inter-agency coordination in national missions
- **Essay/GS4:** Human ingenuity, ethics of safety in high-risk missions, role of science in national development

8. Withdrawal of Cotton Import Duty and Its Implications

- **Background of Import Duty on Cotton**

The 11% import duty on cotton was introduced in the **Union Budget 2021** to protect domestic cotton farmers, as India was producing 350 lakh bales against a requirement of 335 lakh bales. However, declining production in recent years forced the government to withdraw the duty temporarily (April–September 2022, extended later) and most recently till **September 30, 2025**.

- **Current Production and Import Trends**

Domestic cotton production has declined to **294 lakh bales in 2024–25**, the lowest in 15 years, against a requirement of 318 lakh bales. Imports have surged by over 107%, reaching **\$1.20 billion**, mainly from Australia, U.S., Brazil, and Egypt. The **Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)** has procured nearly 100 lakh bales at **MSP spending ₹37,500 crore**, selling 73 lakh bales to stabilise prices.



- **Implications of Withdrawal**

The removal of duty is expected to benefit garment exporters by ensuring a **level playing field** in global markets as input costs decline. However, cotton farmers argue that it **discourages domestic**



cultivation and undermines their profitability, especially when government support is limited. Only about 2 lakh bales in transit will actually benefit from the exemption before September 30.

- **Farmers' Concerns vs. Industry Needs**

Farmers and organisations like **Samyukta Kisan Morcha** say the move disincentivises cotton farming. On the other hand, textile mills and exporters demand a **stable cotton import policy** with suspension of duty in non-peak season and **5% interest subvention on working capital** to help MSMEs procure cotton during peak season, reducing dependence on MSP operations.

- **Constitutional & Legal Angle**

Policy decisions on import duties are guided by the **Union List, Seventh Schedule (Entry 41: Trade and Commerce with foreign countries; Entry 82: Taxes)**, giving the Centre authority. Farmers' rights are protected through **Article 43 (Directive Principles – support to agriculture and cottage industries)**, and MSP procurement is linked with **Food Security and Farmer Welfare policies**.

- **Definition (Key Term: Minimum Support Price – MSP)**

A price fixed by the government to protect farmers from sharp fall in crop prices, ensuring them a minimum assured return for their produce.

Conclusion

The withdrawal of cotton import duty reflects the government's attempt to balance the interests of the **textile industry (export competitiveness)** and **cotton farmers (price protection)**. While it may temporarily help exporters, it risks discouraging cultivation unless supported by stable long-term policy, improved productivity, and farmer-oriented incentives.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS3:** Agriculture, Food Security, Textile Industry, WTO & Trade Policies
- **GS2:** Centre-State relations in agriculture, policy interventions for farmers
- **Essay/GS4:** Balancing industry needs vs farmer welfare, ethics of trade-offs in policymaking

9. Visit of Fiji PM to UIDAI Headquarters & India's Digital Public Infrastructure

- **India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Showcased**

The Prime Minister of Fiji, Sitiveni Rabuka, visited the UIDAI headquarters in New Delhi where Aadhaar and DigiLocker—core pillars of India's DPI—were demonstrated, highlighting their role in inclusive governance, service delivery at scale, and digital empowerment.

- **Aadhaar as a Foundational Layer**

Aadhaar, managed by the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** under the **Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016**, is the world's largest digital identity system. It provides unique biometric-based identity to residents and facilitates **direct benefit transfer (DBT)**, financial inclusion, and efficient welfare delivery.



- **DigiLocker and Digital Service Delivery**

DigiLocker, part of the **Digital India initiative**, enables secure cloud-based storage of official



documents, reduces paperwork, and improves accessibility. It complements Aadhaar in ensuring **paperless, cashless, and presence-less service delivery**.

- **India–Fiji Digital Cooperation**

The visit reflects India's growing role as a **global digital solutions provider**. Cooperation with Fiji signals India's **South-South cooperation approach**, promoting digital inclusion and sharing expertise in governance technologies with developing nations.

- **Key Definitions & Provisions**

- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** Foundational technology systems enabling large-scale digital services for governance and markets.
- **Constitutional Link:** Relates to **Article 38 (promotion of welfare of the people through social order)** and **Article 41 (right to work, education, public assistance)**, which are strengthened through Aadhaar-enabled welfare schemes.
- **Legal Safeguards:** Aadhaar Act, 2016 ensures privacy, security, and limited use of personal data; Supreme Court's **Puttaswamy (2017 & 2018) Judgments** upheld privacy as a **fundamental right under Article 21**, placing restrictions on Aadhaar's mandatory use.

- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

India's demonstration of Aadhaar and DigiLocker to Fiji underscores the **exportability of India's digital governance model**, enhancing its global soft power. For UPSC, this is relevant under topics like **E-Governance, India's Foreign Policy, Digital India Mission, and Welfare Delivery Mechanisms**. It reflects how **digital innovations can be tools of diplomacy**, promoting both domestic efficiency and international cooperation.

10. Sci-Hub Ban and 'One Nation, One Subscription' (ONOS) Scheme

- **Background and Court Ruling:** The Delhi High Court ordered a ban on Sci-Hub and its mirror sites (2024), siding with publishers like Elsevier and Wiley in a copyright infringement case. Courts worldwide have taken a similar stance, highlighting the tension between intellectual property rights (protected under *Article 300A* of the Constitution as property rights) and public access to knowledge (*Article 19(1)(a)* – Right to Information as part of free speech).
- **Problem in Scientific Publishing:** Unlike music or film industries, scientists are not paid by journals; their work is largely taxpayer-funded. Yet, publishers charge exorbitant subscription fees (lakhs per journal) while enjoying high profit margins (~30%). This creates an access barrier, particularly for independent researchers and smaller institutions — making piracy-driven platforms like Sci-Hub popular.
- **ONOS Initiative:** Approved by Union Cabinet in 2024 with ₹6,000 crore (Phase I: 2023–26), ONOS negotiates bulk subscriptions with 30 global publishers, covering 13,000 journals for public institutions (later expanding to private). Aim: democratize access, reduce duplication of costs, and support equitable research opportunities across India.
- **Limitations of ONOS:**





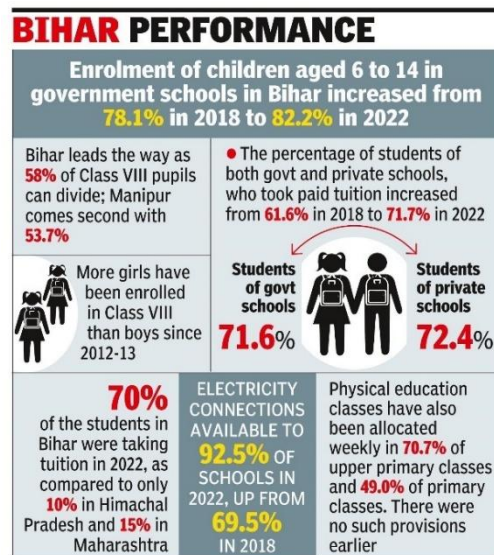
- Excludes many private institutes and independent researchers (until Phase II).
- Reinforces dependence on foreign publishers instead of strengthening Indian publishing capacity.
- Expensive, especially as global trend moves towards *Open Access* (e.g., U.S. mandate for federally funded research to be openly available by 2026, EU's Horizon Europe).
- Does not address structural flaws like copyright transfer from Indian researchers to foreign journals.
- **Alternatives & Policy Reforms:**
 - Develop *Institutional Repositories* and a *National Rights Retention Policy* (like Harvard, MIT) to ensure researchers retain copyright.
 - Promote *Open Access publishing* and use institutional savings for strengthening indigenous journals.
 - Flexible access models (e.g., per-article purchase for niche journals).
 - Balance between *Copyright Act, 1957* protections and *Right to Education/Access to Knowledge* principles.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance:** The Sci-Hub ban symbolizes the clash between corporate profit and public good in knowledge access. ONOS provides a legal, large-scale solution but risks becoming an expensive detour unless coupled with reforms promoting open-access, indigenous publishing, and inclusivity. The issue directly relates to **science & tech policy, IPR regime, constitutional rights, and education reforms** — making it important for UPSC under *GS2 (Governance, Education, Policies)* and *GS3 (Science, Tech, IPR, Innovation)*.

11. Government Schools and Enrolment Trends

- As per the **National Sample Survey (80th Round, 2025)**, government schools account for **55.9% of total enrolments** across India.
- Enrolment in government schools is **higher in rural areas (66%)** compared to **30.1% in urban areas**.
- Private unaided schools constitute **31.9% of enrolment**, reflecting the growing role of private institutions in education delivery.

Expenditure on Education

- **Average annual household expenditure** per student is ₹2,863 in government schools, while it is significantly higher at **₹25,002 in non-government schools** (almost 9 times more).
- **Course fees** form the largest component of expenditure (₹7,111), followed by **textbooks & stationery (₹2,002)**.
- Urban households spend more than rural households — **₹15,143 vs ₹3,979** on course fees alone.





Private Coaching Dependence

- Nearly **27% of students** (about one-third) take **private coaching**, with higher prevalence in urban areas (**30.7%**) compared to rural (**25.5%**).
- This indicates concerns about **quality of teaching in schools** and rising dependence on external support for academic success.

Funding for Education

- **95% of education expenditure is borne by households** through family members.
- Government scholarships constitute the **primary source for only 1.2% of students**, highlighting limited coverage of welfare schemes in education funding.

Rural-Urban Divide

- Urban households report higher **expenditure across all categories** (transportation, uniforms, textbooks, coaching).
- In government schools, only **26.7% students pay course fees**, compared to **95.7% in non-government schools**.
- Among private unaided schools in urban areas, **98% students pay course fees**, deepening socio-economic inequity.

Constitutional & Legal Context

- **Article 21A**: Provides for **Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE)** for children aged 6–14 years.
- **Article 45 (DPSP)**: Directs the State to provide early childhood care and education.
- **RTE Act, 2009**: Mandates free education in government schools and **25% reservation in private schools** for economically weaker sections.
- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**: Emphasises **universal access, affordability, and quality education** by 2030.

Key Definitions

- **Enrolment Ratio**: The proportion of students registered in schools compared to the eligible population.
- **Private Unaided Schools**: Privately managed schools that do not receive government aid but are recognised by education boards.
- **Household Expenditure on Education**: Total financial burden borne by families on course fees, textbooks, uniforms, coaching, and transportation.

Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

The survey reveals that government schools remain the backbone of India's education system, especially in rural areas, but the growing reliance on private institutions and coaching reflects **structural gaps in quality and equity**. The stark expenditure gap between government and private schools highlights **socio-economic disparities** in access to quality education. Limited reliance on scholarships indicates the need for **stronger government interventions** in ensuring affordability.

UPSC Relevance: This topic directly relates to **GS-II (Governance, Social Justice, Education policies,**



RTE Act) and GS-I (Indian Society – inequalities in access to education). It can also be linked with Essay, Ethics (Equity in education), and current affairs for Prelims and Mains.

12. Adi Karmayogi Initiative – Tribal Change Leaders Programme

- **Concept and Objective**

- The **Adi Karmayogi initiative**, launched under the **Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan** of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, aims to create a **cadre of 20 lakh tribal “change leaders”** at the village level.
- Focus is on **participatory problem-solving**, capacity building, and motivation of officials/volunteers for effective scheme implementation.
- Emphasis is on messages like “*solution comes from within*”, “*creating opportunity from challenges*”, and “*initiating action*”.

- **Structure and Implementation**

- Training hierarchy: **240 State-level master trainers → 2,750 district trainers → 15,000 block trainers → 20 lakh village-level leaders**.
- Training involves activities such as **candle lighting (positivity)**, **fishbowl exercise (mutual understanding)**, **knot-tying (teamwork)**, and **role-play (problem-solving in village scenarios)**.
- Programme covers **324 districts in the first phase**, gradually extending to all target villages.

- **Village Vision 2030**

- Residents will prepare a “**Village Vision**” **document** for 2030, depicted as **public murals**, to act as **aspirational blueprints** for local and State administration.
- Aligns with **bottom-up planning** and the **73rd Amendment (Panchayati Raj)** mandate of decentralised governance.

- **Institutional Support – Adi Seva Kendras**

- Proposal to set up **1 lakh Adi Seva Kendras** as **single-window centres** for access to government welfare schemes.
- Objective: achieve **100% saturation** of tribal welfare schemes, ensuring last-mile delivery.

- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**

- **Article 342**: Identification of Scheduled Tribes.
- **Fifth & Sixth Schedule**: Special provisions for administration and governance in tribal areas.
- **PESA Act, 1996 (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act)**: Empowers Gram Sabhas in decision-making for tribal development.
- **Forest Rights Act, 2006**: Recognises rights of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes.





- **Directive Principles (Article 46):** Duty of the State to promote educational and economic interests of Scheduled Tribes.

- **Significance**

- Tackles **motivation deficit** in governance rather than lack of schemes.
- Promotes **community participation, leadership development, and behavioural change** among tribal officials and volunteers.
- Helps build **ownership of schemes** at the grassroots and ensures sustainable development.

Conclusion

The Adi Karmayogi initiative represents a shift from **scheme-centric delivery** to **human-centric motivation and empowerment** in tribal governance. By training tribal leaders as agents of change, it seeks to bridge the gap between policy and ground-level execution, strengthen participatory democracy, and fulfil constitutional mandates of tribal welfare.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** Constitutional provisions for Scheduled Tribes, schemes of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, PESA Act, Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan.
- **Mains (GS-II & GS-I):** Issues related to vulnerable sections, tribal empowerment, participatory governance, role of leadership in development.
- **Essay & Ethics (GS-IV):** Grassroots leadership, motivational governance, and community participation in solving developmental challenges.

13. National Designated Authority (NDA) for Carbon Markets

- **Concept and Background**

- The **National Designated Authority (NDA)** has been set up by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change as a **mandatory requirement under Article 6 of the 2015 Paris Agreement**.
- Article 6 of the Paris Agreement enables **carbon markets** by allowing countries to trade emission reduction units (carbon credits).
- The final operational framework was agreed at **COP-29 (Baku, 2024)** after prolonged negotiations.

- **Definition – Carbon Market**

- A **carbon market** is a trading system where countries/companies can buy or sell carbon credits, representing the reduction of one tonne of CO₂ (or equivalent greenhouse gases) to meet emission reduction targets.
- Purpose: Encourage cost-effective emission reductions and incentivise green projects.

Centre finalises National Designated Authority to kick-start carbon markets

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has announced a National Designated Authority (NDA), a mandatory requirement under the provisions of the 2015 Paris Agreement, to enable a carbon emissions trading regime.

Within the Paris Agreement, a section called Article 6 defines the contours under which such an emissions trading regime or a market can take shape. A long-standing bone of contention among countries, Article 6 was finally passed at the 29th edition of the climate COP in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024.

The creation of an NDA is a mandatory requirement under Article 6. A notification from the Environment Ministry on

The authority is a mandatory body to be set up under the provisions of 2015 Paris Agreement

Friday lays out the composition of the NDA, which is a 21-member committee headed by the Secretary of the Environment Ministry. Representatives include officials from the Ministries of External Affairs, Steel, and Renewable Energy, and NITI Aayog.

The NDA's responsibilities include recommending to the Union government a list of activities that can be considered for the trading of emission reduction units from projects under Article 6, modifying them from time to time in line with national sustainable goals, country-specific criteria and other national

priorities; receive projects or activities for evaluation, approval and authorisation; and authorise the use of emission reduction units from projects for use towards achievement of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

The NDC refers to commitments by countries to reduce emissions by diverting their energy consumption towards renewable energy sources and taking action to reduce carbon concentrations in the atmosphere.

India's NDC commits to reducing its GDP's emission intensity by 45% by 2030 from 2005 levels, achieving 50% electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, and creating an additional carbon sink equivalent to 2.5-3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2030 through afforestation.



- **Structure of NDA**

- The NDA is a **21-member committee** headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Environment.
- Members include representatives from Ministries of External Affairs, Steel, Renewable Energy, and NITI Aayog.
- This inter-ministerial structure ensures alignment of climate action with national development priorities.

- **Functions and Responsibilities**

- Recommend activities/projects eligible for generating **emission reduction units (ERUs)** under Article 6.
- Evaluate, approve, and authorise projects for carbon credit generation and international trading.
- Modify eligible activities based on **national sustainable development goals and domestic priorities**.
- Authorise the use of carbon credits to meet India's **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**.

- **India's NDC Commitments (Paris Agreement, updated 2022)**

- Reduce **emissions intensity of GDP by 45%** from 2005 levels by 2030.
- Achieve **50% of total power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030**.
- Create additional **carbon sink of 2.5–3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2030** through afforestation.

- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**

- **Article 48A:** Directive Principle – State shall protect and improve the environment.
- **Article 51A(g):** Fundamental Duty – Every citizen to protect the environment.
- **Environment Protection Act, 1986:** Provides legislative backing for carbon market mechanisms.
- **Energy Conservation Act, 2001 (amended 2022):** Introduced provisions for a **domestic carbon credit trading scheme**.

- **Significance**

- Positions India as a **key player in global carbon markets**, creating opportunities for revenue through carbon trading.
- Promotes **green investment, technology transfer, and sustainable projects**.
- Helps balance **development needs with climate obligations**, ensuring a pathway to net-zero by 2070.

Conclusion

The finalisation of the **National Designated Authority** marks a crucial step in operationalising India's carbon markets in line with the Paris Agreement. By institutionalising a transparent framework for carbon



trading, it will not only accelerate India's transition towards clean energy but also generate financial resources for sustainable development.

UPSC Relevance

- **Prelims:** Article 6 of Paris Agreement, Carbon Markets, India's NDC targets, Energy Conservation Act amendments.
 - **Mains (GS-III):** Climate change mitigation, role of carbon markets, India's climate policy, Paris Agreement commitments.
 - **Essay & Ethics (GS-IV):** Market-based environmental regulation, global justice in climate governance, balancing development and sustainability.
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