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# **VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE**

## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION**

**DATE: 03/09/2025 (WEDNESDAY)**



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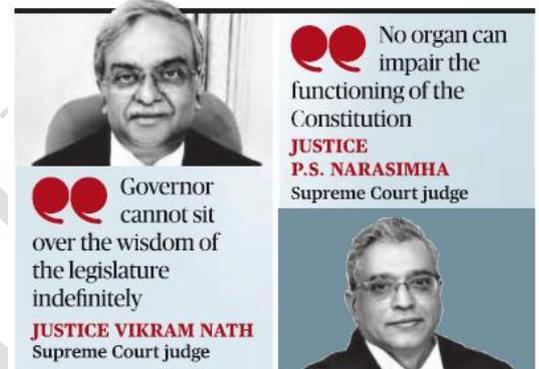
## 1. Governors Can't Sit Over Bills Endlessly – SC Observations

### • Context & Judicial Observations

- A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court orally observed that **Governors cannot indefinitely delay giving assent to Bills** passed by State legislatures.
- Chief Justice B.R. Gavai and Justices Vikram Nath and P.S. Narasimha noted that no constitutional organ can impede the functioning of the Constitution.
- The Court emphasized that **withholding assent without justification violates constitutional principles**.

### • Arguments from States (Tamil Nadu & West Bengal)

- Tamil Nadu argued that Governors “cannot assume to be royalty in a Republic” and must respect legislative intent.
- West Bengal (represented by Kapil Sibal) stressed that **high constitutional offices must work collaboratively, not combatively**.
- Both States highlighted that **legislation is a sovereign act**, which requires timely assent.



### • Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 200**: Provides Governors four options when a Bill is presented – (a) assent, (b) withhold assent, (c) reserve for President’s consideration, or (d) return (if not Money Bill) for reconsideration.
- **Article 201**: If a Bill is reserved for the President, he may assent or withhold assent.
- The Constitution expects **immediacy in decision-making** to maintain democratic accountability.

### • Key Issues Highlighted

- **Delay in Assent**: Governors sitting on Bills without action undermines the sovereignty of legislatures.
- **Balance of Power**: The Governor is a **nominal head** and must act in line with the advice of the Council of Ministers (Article 163).
- **Judicial Concerns**: Allowing indefinite delay would create an “absurdity” and disturb the principle of federalism.

### • Definition of Key Terms

- **Assent to Bills**: Formal approval given by the Governor/President, required for a Bill to become law.
- **Withhold Assent**: Power of the Governor/President to refuse approval; however, this is to be exercised sparingly within constitutional limits.
- **Reservation of Bills**: Certain Bills must/may be reserved for Presidential consideration, especially if they conflict with Union laws or affect larger national interest.



- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- The Supreme Court's observations reinforce the principle that **Governors are constitutional authorities, not political overlords**.
- Their role is to uphold **democratic federalism**, ensure smooth legislative functioning, and act as a bridge between Union and State.
- **UPSC Relevance:** Important for **Polity & Governance (GS Paper II)** – Topics like Centre-State Relations, Role of Governor, Constitutional Morality, Judicial Review, and Federalism.

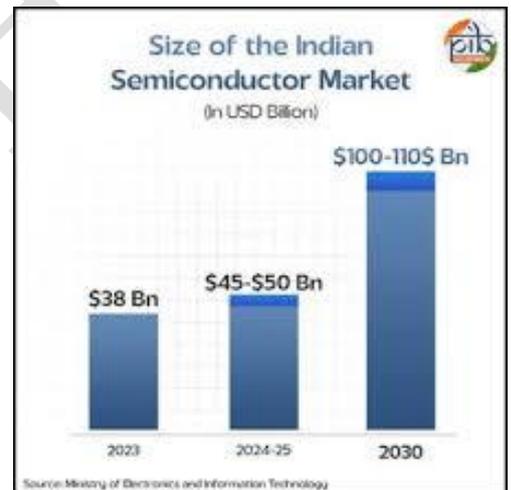
## 2. India's Push Towards \$1-Trillion Semiconductor Market

- **Context & PM's Statement**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India is targeting a significant share in the **global semiconductor market**, projected to reach **\$1 trillion**.
- He assured **faster approvals** for projects to reduce manufacturing delays and highlighted the **next phase of the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)**.

- **Current Progress & Investments**

- In 2025, India cleared **five new semiconductor projects**, taking the total to **10 projects**.
- These projects have attracted an investment of **\$18 billion (~₹1.5 lakh crore)**, showing **global confidence in India's manufacturing ecosystem**.
- India recorded **7.8% GDP growth**, with strong contributions across sectors, strengthening the case for semiconductor-led industrial expansion.



- **Economic & Strategic Importance**

- **Semiconductor Chips:** Called the “**digital diamonds**” of the 21st century, they are crucial for electronics, AI, defense, and digital economy.
- Analogous to **crude oil in the 20th century**, semiconductors are the **key drivers of modern economic growth and technological sovereignty**.
- Building a domestic semiconductor ecosystem will **reduce import dependence** and strengthen **Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance)**.

- **Constitutional & Policy Framework**

- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM):** Launched in 2021 under the **Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)** to provide incentives, R&D support, and infrastructure for chip manufacturing.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:** Provides financial support to boost domestic semiconductor and display fabs.
- **Digital India Initiative:** Creates a policy framework that integrates semiconductors with the larger goals of **digital economy and innovation-led growth**.



- **Definition of Key Terms**

- **Semiconductor:** A material with conductivity between conductor and insulator, used to make integrated circuits (ICs) and chips for electronic devices.
- **Fab (Fabrication Plant):** A highly advanced facility where semiconductor wafers are manufactured.
- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM):** A specialized government initiative to build a robust semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem in India.

- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- India's semiconductor push is a **strategic economic and technological move** that can reshape its position in the global supply chain.
- It addresses concerns of **supply chain resilience, technological sovereignty, and national security**.
- **UPSC Relevance:** Important for **GS Paper III (Economy, Science & Tech)** and **GS Paper II (Policy, Governance)** – topics include industrial policy, digital economy, strategic technology, and self-reliance.

### 3. Onam Festivities in Malappuram Amid Religious Caution

- **Context & Celebrations**

- Onam celebrations in Malappuram witnessed **unique and creative performances**, including King Maveli's entry by **helicopter** (GEMS Arts & Science College) and via **pulley-assisted act from a well** (Fire Station festivities).
- Youth-driven innovations reflect **growing cultural enthusiasm** and attempts to make celebrations distinct.

- **Religious Concerns Raised**

- **Islamic scholars (traditional & reformist)** cautioned against participation, stating Onam is linked to Hindu traditions and may conflict with **Islam's monotheistic principles**.
- Senior scholar Kanniyan Mohammed Kutty argued that celebrating festivals like Onam or Vishu could **dilute religious identity**.
- Leaders like IUML State President Syed Sadikali Shihab Thangal faced criticism for publicly participating in Onam songs.



- **Socio-Cultural Significance of Onam**

- **Onam:** Kerala's harvest festival rooted in the legend of **King Mahabali (Maveli)**, symbolizing prosperity, equality, and cultural unity.
- The festival has gradually evolved into a **secular cultural celebration** beyond religious boundaries, representing Kerala's pluralistic ethos.



- In Malappuram, youth participation highlighted **generational change** and **cultural inclusivity**.
- **Key Constitutional & Legal Aspects**
  - **Article 25:** Guarantees freedom of conscience and right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality, and health.
  - **Article 29 & 30:** Protect the rights of minorities to conserve their culture and traditions.
  - Indian secularism promotes “**sarva dharma sambhava**” (**equal respect for all religions**), ensuring cultural coexistence.
- **Definitions of Key Terms**
  - **Onam:** Annual harvest festival of Kerala celebrating the mythical return of King Mahabali.
  - **Secularism in India:** Equal treatment of all religions by the State, unlike Western secularism which implies strict separation of religion and State.
  - **Cultural Syncretism:** Blending of diverse cultural or religious traditions to create shared practices.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - The Malappuram Onam case highlights **tensions between religious orthodoxy and evolving cultural practices**.
  - It reflects India’s ongoing debates on **identity, secularism, and pluralism**, while showcasing the role of youth in shaping cultural narratives.
  - **UPSC Relevance:** Important for **GS Paper I (Indian Society, Culture)** and **GS Paper II (Polity, Secularism, Minority Rights)** – covers themes of cultural diversity, constitutional protections, and secular practices.

#### 4. U.P. Government to Establish Outsourcing Service Corporation

- **Context & Decision**
  - The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approved the creation of the **Outsource Service Corporation Limited** to regulate and streamline recruitment of outsourced employees.
  - It will appoint employees for **three years** with a monthly honorarium of **₹16,000–₹20,000**.
  - The move aims to ensure **transparency, accountability, and better employee welfare** in outsourcing.
- **Previous System & Issues**
  - Earlier, recruitment for outsourced work was managed by **private agencies** with no government oversight.
  - Allegations included **underpayment, lack of social security, and arbitrary practices**.
  - Workers faced uncertainty due to the absence of a formal framework for benefits and grievance redressal.
- **New Framework & Structure**



- The corporation will be established under **Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013**, functioning as a **non-profit public limited company**.
- Agencies will now be empaneled through **fair, transparent processes** on the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal**.
- Salaries will be **directly transferred** to employees' bank accounts between the 1st–5th of every month.
- **Employee Benefits & Protections**
  - Mandatory **Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)** and **Employees' State Insurance (ESI)** contributions.
  - **Maternity leave for women employees** and **skill development training** for all employees.
  - Direct wage transfers reduce chances of corruption and ensure timely payments.
- **Definitions of Key Terms**
  - **Outsourcing**: The practice of contracting third-party entities to perform services or functions traditionally done within an organization.
  - **Section 8 Company**: A non-profit company under the Companies Act, 2013, formed for promoting charitable or not-for-profit objectives, where profits are reinvested for the stated purpose.
  - **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)**: A government-run digital platform for transparent procurement of goods and services.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - The initiative represents a **shift towards formalization of informal labor practices**, ensuring workers' dignity, welfare, and transparency in governance.
  - It aligns with the principles of **social justice, labor rights, and welfare state obligations** under the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs).
  - **UPSC Relevance**: Significant for **GS Paper II (Governance, Transparency, Public Policy)** and **GS Paper III (Employment, Inclusive Growth, Labor Reforms)** – covers themes of **labor welfare, good governance, and State responsibility**.



## 5. India Needs More Women Judges in the Supreme Court

- **Context & Current Scenario**
  - With the retirement of Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia (August 2025), the Supreme Court faced **two vacancies** but did not appoint any woman judge.
  - Justice B.V. Nagarathna remains the **sole woman judge** out of 34 judges. She is scheduled to be India's **first woman CJI in 2027** but only for 36 days.



- Since 1950, only **11 women judges (3.8%)** have been appointed out of 287 total judges, reflecting **acute gender imbalance**.

- **Historical Trends & Issues**

- First woman judge: **Justice Fathima Beevi (1989)**; subsequent appointments have been rare and sporadic.
- Women judges are often appointed **late in age**, limiting their tenure, and rarely make it to the **Collegium or CJI position**.
- **Caste & religious diversity** is also missing—no SC/ST women judges, and Justice Fathima Beevi remains the only judge from a minority faith.
- From the Bar, **only Justice Indu Malhotra (2018)** was directly elevated; male judges have been appointed more frequently.

- **Appointment Process & Concerns**

- Appointments follow the **Collegium system** (CJI + four senior-most judges), with recommendations sent to the Government and President for final approval.
- **Memorandum of Procedure (MoP)** guides appointments, but criteria are not transparent; caste, religion, and region have been considered, but **gender is not institutionalised** as a factor.
- Lack of transparency and inconsistency in Collegium resolutions creates concerns about **accountability and inclusivity**.



- **Importance of Women Judges**

- **Gender diversity** ensures that the judiciary is **representative of society** and sensitive to varied social contexts.
- Women judges bring **unique perspectives** shaped by personal and professional experiences, improving **judicial reasoning and inclusiveness**.
- Their presence enhances **public trust and legitimacy** in the judiciary, especially in gender-related cases.

- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**

- **Article 14:** Right to equality before law.
- **Article 15:** Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.
- **Article 124:** Appointment of Supreme Court judges by the President in consultation with judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV):** Aim to promote justice—social, economic, and political—requiring inclusivity in institutions.

- **Definitions of Key Terms**



- **Collegium System:** A judicial body comprising the CJI and senior-most judges that recommends appointments and transfers in higher judiciary.
- **Gender Representation:** Equitable inclusion of women and men in institutions, ensuring diverse perspectives in decision-making.
- **Direct Elevation from Bar:** Appointment of practicing lawyers directly as judges of the Supreme Court, without prior service as High Court judges.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - The **under-representation of women in the Supreme Court** undermines India's constitutional promise of equality and inclusivity.
  - Institutionalising **gender as a criterion in judicial appointments** is necessary to correct structural imbalance and strengthen judicial legitimacy.
  - **UPSC Relevance:** Important for **GS Paper II (Polity, Judiciary, Governance, Gender Issues)** and **Essay Paper** – relates to gender justice, independence of judiciary, transparency in appointments, and constitutional morality.

## 6. Supreme Court's Intervention for Injured Military Cadets

- **Context & SC Suo Motu Action**
  - The Supreme Court of India, taking **suo motu cognisance** of a media report, addressed the plight of cadets injured during training and later boarded out of academies without adequate support.
  - The Court highlighted the need for **flexibility and empathy** in applying rules to address lifelong consequences of injuries sustained in service.
- **Issues in the Existing System**
  - Bureaucratic rigidity often leads to denial of adequate **compensation, pension, and benefits** to disabled cadets and their families.
  - Extant rules do not cover all possible variations of human misfortune sustained in the line of military duty.
  - Relief often comes only through **individual interventions** (e.g., Governors, Defence Ministers), making justice uncertain and selective.
- **Illustrative Cases**
  - **1989 Case:** Widow of an IAF pilot initially denied enhanced pension despite being pregnant at the time of her husband's death; rules later amended after delays.
  - **Siachen Crash Case:** Severely injured pilot's career was saved due to Governor Shekhar Dutt's intervention with Defence Ministers A.K. Antony and later Manohar Parrikar, ensuring his service extension.
  - These cases underline the **need for institutionalised policies**, not ad-hoc interventions.





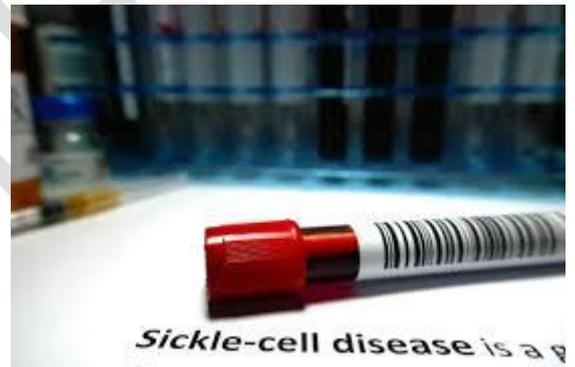
- **Government's Recent Action**
  - Following SC's notice, the Government quickly extended **medical benefits to disabled cadets** at par with ex-servicemen.
  - This demonstrates that **judicial oversight can push the executive** to act with compassion and responsibility.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**
  - **Article 21:** Right to life with dignity—extends to disabled soldiers and cadets.
  - **Article 14:** Equality before law—ensures uniform application of benefits without discrimination.
  - **Directive Principles (Article 39, 41, 42):** Promote social justice, assistance in case of disablement, and humane working conditions.
  - Judicial activism under **Article 32 and 142** empowers the SC to deliver complete justice.
- **Definitions of Key Terms**
  - **Suo Motu Cognisance:** Action taken by a court on its own, without a formal petition, usually to address public interest or injustice.
  - **Ex-Servicemen Benefits:** Welfare measures such as pension, healthcare, housing, and rehabilitation provided to retired defence personnel.
  - **Boarded Out:** Discharge of cadets/soldiers from service due to medical unfitness or disability.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - The case underscores the **moral obligation of the State** to care for those who risk their lives in national service.
  - It highlights the need for **policy reforms, bureaucratic sensitivity, and judicial intervention** in ensuring justice to defence personnel.
  - **UPSC Relevance:** Important for **GS Paper II (Judiciary, Governance, Welfare Schemes)**, **GS Paper III (Internal Security, Defence, Disaster Management)**, and **Ethics Paper (Compassion, Justice, Empathy in Public Administration)**.

## 7. Sickle Cell Disease and Disability Justice

- **Context & Government Guidelines**
  - In March 2024, the Government of India revised guidelines under the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016** for assessing disability among individuals with **sickle cell disease (SCD)**, sickle cell with beta-thalassaemia, or Hb D.
  - SCD is a chronic, painful, and disabling blood disorder disproportionately affecting **Adivasi and Dalit communities**. Recognition under the Act was expected to ensure access to reservations in employment, education, healthcare, and welfare schemes.
- **Issues with Recognition under RPWD Act, 2016**



- The Act expanded the definition of disability and aligns with the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.
- However, SCD patients are excluded from the **4% reservation quota** in public employment (available for vision, hearing, locomotor, and intellectual disabilities).
- The Act applies only to persons with **benchmark disabilities** ( $\geq 40\%$  impairment as per Section 2(r)), leaving out many with debilitating but fluctuating conditions.
- **Problems in Disability Certification**
  - Certification under **Section 58 of the RPWD Act** requires medical evaluation, which is often inconsistent and subjective across hospitals and boards.
  - The scoring system focuses narrowly on biomedical complications (e.g., transfusions, neurological damage), neglecting invisible or episodic suffering such as recurrent pain, fatigue, and social exclusion.
  - Marginalised groups face structural barriers like **limited access to diagnostic facilities, travel constraints, and stigma**, making certification and benefits inaccessible.
- **Socioeconomic & Legal Dimensions**
  - SCD disrupts education, reduces employment opportunities, and shortens life expectancy, thereby intensifying poverty cycles in vulnerable communities.
  - Under **Section 80U of the Income Tax Act, 1961**, certified disabled persons can claim tax deductions (₹75,000–₹1.25 lakh). However, many with SCD struggle to obtain certification.
  - Some states (e.g., Odisha, Himachal Pradesh) offer enhanced pensions for severe disabilities, but SCD patients are inconsistently covered.
- **Key Definitions**
  - **Sickle Cell Disease (SCD):** A genetic blood disorder where red blood cells deform into a sickle shape, causing pain, anaemia, organ damage, and reduced lifespan.
  - **Benchmark Disability:** As per RPWD Act, individuals with  $\geq 40\%$  disability who qualify for specific reservations and welfare schemes.
  - **Disability Justice:** A rights-based approach that recognizes disability not only as a medical condition but also as a product of **social exclusion and structural barriers**.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - Despite recognition under the RPWD Act, SCD patients remain excluded from critical reservations and benefits due to **rigid biomedical criteria and flawed certification systems**.
  - Ensuring justice requires **reforming certification to include invisible and fluctuating disabilities**, extending reservations, and making welfare accessible to marginalised groups.





- **UPSC Relevance:** Crucial for **GS Paper II (Governance, Social Justice, Welfare of Vulnerable Sections, Acts & Policies)**, **GS Paper III (Public Health, Inclusive Growth)**, and **Ethics Paper (Equity, Compassion, Rights of Marginalised Groups)**.

## 8. Supreme Court Order on Regulatory Assets and DISCOMs

### • Context & SC Directions

- The Supreme Court directed **State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs)** and **distribution companies (DISCOMs)** to clear existing **regulatory assets** within four years and new ones within three years.
- It capped regulatory assets at **3% of Annual Revenue Requirement (ARR)** and mandated **transparent recovery roadmaps** with audits for non-compliance.

### • Definition & Causes of Regulatory Assets

- **Regulatory Assets:** Deferred revenue gaps allowed by regulators when **Average Cost of Supply (ACS) > Annual Revenue Requirement (ARR)**. DISCOMs recover them later from consumers, often with interest.
- Causes of ACS-ARR gap: non-cost-reflective tariffs, delayed government subsidies, and sudden fuel price hikes.
- Example: Tamil Nadu reported ₹89,375 crore regulatory assets in FY 2021-22, showing the issue is systemic.



### • Impact on Consumers & DISCOMs

- Consumers: Initially shielded from tariff hikes, but later face **steeper increases** plus interest costs. Example: Delhi DISCOMs may need to recover ₹16,580 crore annually, adding ~₹5.5/unit.
- DISCOMs: Face **cash flow crises**, delayed payments to generators, rising debt, and reduced ability to invest in grid modernization and renewable integration.

### • Legal & Policy Provisions

- **Electricity Act, 2003:** Empowers SERCs to determine tariffs (Section 61, 62) and ensure financial viability of DISCOMs while protecting consumers.
- **National Tariff Policy, 2016:** Stresses cost-reflective tariffs and timely subsidy payments.
- SC order enforces **financial discipline**, transparency, and consumer protection as part of constitutional principles under **Article 38 (welfare state)** and **Article 39(b) (distribution of resources for common good)**.

### • Way Forward

- Align tariffs with actual costs while safeguarding vulnerable consumers through **targeted subsidies**.
- Ensure **timely release of subsidies** by State governments.



- Adopt **automatic fuel cost adjustment mechanisms** to reflect input price changes quickly.
- Conduct **annual true-up exercises** to prevent backlog accumulation.
- Treat regulatory assets as an **exceptional tool**, not a routine practice.
- **Key Definitions**
  - **DISCOMs**: State-run or private power distribution companies delivering electricity to end-users.
  - **ACS (Average Cost of Supply)**: Total expense of supplying one unit of electricity.
  - **ARR (Annual Revenue Requirement)**: Revenue DISCOMs collect from tariffs and subsidies.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - The SC's intervention highlights the need for **financial prudence, transparent tariff setting, and timely subsidies** to ensure the sustainability of India's power sector.
  - **UPSC Relevance**: Important for **GS Paper II (Judiciary's role, Governance, Welfare policies)**, **GS Paper III (Energy sector, Infrastructure, Economy)**, and **Essay/Ethics (Balancing consumer interest with financial sustainability)**.

## 9. Gig Economy and the Lives of Gig Workers

- **Nature and Growth of Gig Economy**
  - **Definition**: The gig economy refers to a labour market dominated by short-term, flexible jobs, often mediated through digital platforms (e.g., food delivery, ride-hailing, e-commerce logistics).
  - NITI Aayog (2022) projected gig workforce growth from **7.7 million (2020-21) to 23.5 million by 2029-30**, with the Indian digital economy expected to reach **\$1 trillion by 2030**.
- **Challenges Faced by Gig Workers**
  - Job insecurity, low wages, absence of social security, and algorithm-driven performance pressures.
  - Workers lack benefits such as health insurance, pension, paid leave, and face precarious conditions despite being integral to modern consumer convenience.
  - Emotional toll: anxiety, isolation, and erosion of human connections due to “faceless” transactions.
- **Advantages and Opportunities**
  - Provides flexibility and autonomy, aligning with the aspirations of **Gen X, Y, Z** seeking multiple income streams and freedom of work.
  - Gig roles exist not only in digital platforms but also in traditional businesses such as IT, retail, and creative industries.





- COVID-19 accelerated the shift toward **AI-based digital jobs** and remote gig work.
- **Constitutional and Legal Framework**
  - **Article 21:** Right to livelihood and dignity.
  - **Directive Principles (Article 38, 39, 43):** Promote social and economic justice, adequate livelihood, and living wages.
  - **Code on Social Security, 2020:** Recognises gig and platform workers, provides for schemes relating to insurance, health, maternity, old-age benefits, and social security funds.
  - **ILO Conventions:** Stress protection for all workers, including non-standard forms of employment.
- **Global and Indian Perspectives**
  - Books like *Zwigato* (film) and works by Vandana Vasudevan and Pradip Thomas highlight lived realities of gig workers, the **imbalance of corporate power vs worker precarity**, and the lack of institutional support.
  - International literature (Sarah Kessler, Jamie Woodcock) explores whether flexible jobs can also provide sustainable wages and dignity of work.
- **Way Forward**
  - Institutionalising **labour rights** for gig workers, including social security, fair wages, and health protection.
  - Strengthening **algorithmic transparency** and ensuring accountability of platforms.
  - Encouraging collective bargaining and **unionisation of gig workers**.
  - Balancing innovation and convenience with **worker dignity and welfare** to ensure inclusive digital growth.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - The gig economy is a **double-edged sword**: while it provides opportunities and consumer convenience, it also creates a precarious workforce lacking adequate protections.
  - **UPSC Relevance:**
    - **GS Paper II:** Governance, social justice, labour rights, policies.
    - **GS Paper III:** Economic growth, employment trends, digital economy.
    - **Essay/Ethics:** Equity, dignity of labour, impact of technology on society.

## 10. APEDA's BHARATI Initiative for Agri-Food Exports

- **About BHARATI Initiative**
  - **Definition:** BHARATI stands for *Bharat's Hub for Agritech, Resilience, Advancement and Incubation for Export Enablement*.
  - Launched by **APEDA** (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) in September 2025 to empower **100 agri-food and agri-tech startups**.



- Aim: Drive innovation, improve value addition, and achieve the **target of \$50 billion agri-food exports by 2030.**
- **Key Features of the Programme**
  - Focus on **GI-tagged products, organic foods, superfoods, livestock products, AYUSH products.**
  - Promotion of advanced technologies: **AI-based quality control, blockchain traceability, IoT-enabled cold chains, agri-fintech solutions.**
  - Startups will undergo a **3-month acceleration programme** on product development, export readiness, regulatory compliance, and market access.
- **Challenges Addressed**
  - Tackles issues of **perishability, wastage, packaging, quality assurance, and logistics** in agri-exports.
  - Provides support for **SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary) and TBT (Technical Barriers to Trade)** compliance.
  - Encourages **sustainability and innovative packaging** to enhance competitiveness.
- **Institutional and Policy Alignment**
  - Part of **Atmanirbhar Bharat, Digital India, Vocal for Local, Start-Up India** initiatives.
  - Collaboration with **state agricultural boards, universities (IITs/NITs), industry bodies, and accelerators** to strengthen the ecosystem.
  - APEDA functions under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, established through the **APEDA Act, 1985**, with responsibility for promoting scheduled product exports.
- **Constitutional and Legal Backing**
  - **Article 19(1)(g):** Freedom to practice trade and profession, supporting entrepreneurship.
  - **Article 43 & 48:** Promotion of cottage industries, agricultural modernisation.
  - **WTO Compliance:** Aligns with global trade obligations under **SPS Agreement and TBT Agreement.**
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - The BHARATI initiative is a **strategic step to transform Indian agriculture from subsistence-driven to innovation-led, export-oriented growth.**
  - It leverages startups and technology to boost farmer incomes, reduce wastage, and strengthen India's position in global agri-food trade.
  - **UPSC Relevance:**
    - **GS Paper II:** Government policies, role of statutory bodies (APEDA).
    - **GS Paper III:** Agriculture, startups, export growth, WTO issues.





- **Essay/Ethics:** Atmanirbhar Bharat, sustainable trade, technology for social good.

## 11. India–Thailand Joint Military Exercise MAITREE-XIV

### • About the Exercise

- **Exercise MAITREE** is a bilateral military exercise between the **Indian Army and Royal Thai Army**, instituted in **2006**.
- The **14th edition (MAITREE-XIV)** is being held at **Joint Training Node, Umroi, Meghalaya (1–14 September 2025)**.
- The Indian contingent: **120 personnel from the Madras Regiment**; Thai contingent: **53 personnel from the 1st Infantry Battalion, 14th Infantry Brigade**.

### • Objectives and Focus Areas

- Enhance **cooperation, interoperability, and mutual understanding** between the two armies.
- Conduct **company-level counter-terrorist operations** in semi-urban terrain under **Chapter VII of the UN Charter (peace and security enforcement measures)**.
- Includes **tactical drills, joint planning, special arms skills, raiding operations, physical training**, and culminates in a **48-hour validation exercise** simulating realistic scenarios.

### • Strategic Importance

- Reinforces **bilateral defence cooperation** between India and Thailand.
- Promotes **regional peace, stability, and security** in the Indo-Pacific.
- Complements India's **Act East Policy** and Thailand's role in ASEAN, deepening India–ASEAN defence relations.

### • Constitutional & Legal Framework

- **Article 51(c) of the Indian Constitution:** promotes international peace, security, and cooperation.
- Defence cooperation aligns with India's **foreign policy principles** under the UN Charter.
- Joint exercises form part of **India's defence diplomacy**, complementing multilateral frameworks like **ADMM-Plus (ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus)**.

### • Key Terms

- **Interoperability:** Ability of military forces from different nations to operate together effectively.
- **Chapter VII of UN Charter:** Authorises UN Security Council to take action regarding threats to peace, including use of force if necessary.

### • Conclusion & UPSC Relevance





- Exercise MAITREE-XIV strengthens **military-to-military ties**, builds trust, and ensures preparedness against common threats like terrorism.
- It showcases India's growing defence engagement with Southeast Asia, reflecting its **strategic vision for Indo-Pacific security**.
- **UPSC Relevance:**
  - **GS Paper II:** International Relations (India–ASEAN, Act East Policy).
  - **GS Paper III:** Security challenges, counter-terrorism, defence preparedness.
  - **Essay/Ethics:** Role of international cooperation in maintaining peace and stability.

## 12. India Achieves Milestone with First Made-in-India Semiconductor Chips

### • Launch of Indigenous Chips & ISM 2.0

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the first set of **Made-in-India semiconductor chips** under the **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)** launched in 2021.
- Transition from **approvals to production in just 3.5 years** reflects India's rapid progress in deep tech manufacturing.
- **ISM 2.0** to focus on making India a **"Product Nation"**, covering entire semiconductor value chain including **fabs, OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test), capital equipment, and materials**.

### • MoUs and Key Announcements at Semicon India 2025

- **12 MoUs signed** with global and domestic players, focusing on design, manufacturing, packaging, IP creation, and skilling.
- Major projects include: **indigenous automotive camera modules, MEMS microphones, IoT Evolution Board, Make-in-India Secure Chips**, and partnerships with IITs, IISc, C-DAC, and global leaders like Merck and Infineon.
- **Deep Tech Alliance (\$1 billion commitment)** announced to promote semiconductors, clean energy, quantum technologies, biotechnology, and space.



### • Strategic & Economic Significance

- Semiconductor production in India already **15–30% more cost-competitive** than global benchmarks.
- Industry projected to be **\$1 trillion by 2030**, positioning India as a **global hub** for semiconductors.
- Chips designed by Indian students at **SCL Mohali** showcased India's growing **talent pool** (20% of global semiconductor workforce).

### • Government Vision & Global Partnerships



- Initiative aligned with **Atmanirbhar Bharat, Digital India, and Start-up India**.
- Participation of **ASML, Lam Research, Applied Materials, Tokyo Electron, Merck**, etc. reflects strong global trust.
- India building a **trusted, IP-respecting ecosystem**, with emphasis on **co-development and supply chain security**.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**
  - **Article 38 & 39 (DPSP)**: promote technological and economic development ensuring equitable distribution.
  - **Article 51(c)**: encourages international cooperation in science and technology.
  - Supported by schemes like **Design Linked Incentive (DLI)** under **MeitY** for IP creation and innovation.
- **Key Definitions**
  - **Semiconductor**: A material with conductivity between conductor and insulator, used in chips, processors, and electronic devices.
  - **Fabs**: Fabrication plants for manufacturing semiconductor wafers.
  - **OSAT**: Units that package and test semiconductor chips after fabrication.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - India's semiconductor progress reflects its emergence as a **trusted global technology hub**, reducing dependence on imports and enhancing **economic security**.
  - It strengthens **strategic autonomy** in critical tech areas, supporting **digital sovereignty and innovation-driven growth**.
  - **UPSC Relevance**:
    - **GS Paper II**: International collaborations, technology diplomacy.
    - **GS Paper III**: Science & Tech (Semiconductors, Quantum, Clean Energy), Atmanirbhar Bharat.
    - **Essay/Ethics**: Role of vision, innovation, and self-reliance in nation-building.