



“ We help you reach for the star ”

VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 11/09/2025 (THURSDAY)



 **9972258970 & 9740702455**

**#317/A SKB Arcade, D. Subbaiah Road,
Ramaswamy Circle, Mysuru-570004**



Table of Contents

1. Impact of Heavy Rains on Economy – Key Points	2
2. India–US Trade Talks and Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)	3
3. Fitch Raises India’s FY26 GDP Growth Outlook	4
4. Parliamentary Panel on Fake News	5
5. Concern of Tea Planters over Low-Quality Imports	6
6. Plastic Waste Management in India	7
7. India’s Approach to Cryptocurrency Regulation	8
8. EU’s Move to Phase Out Russian Fuel	9
9. Delhi Govt. Microchipping Stray Dogs for Rabies Control	10
10. Demand for Indo-Bhutan River Commission with West Bengal as Member	11
11. The Way Forward on Katchatheevu and Palk Strait Disputes	12
12. Political Instability and Economic Challenges in Nepal	14
13. Manipur Law on Regulating Caste Certificates	16
14. Governors Sitting on Bills – SC’s Concern	17

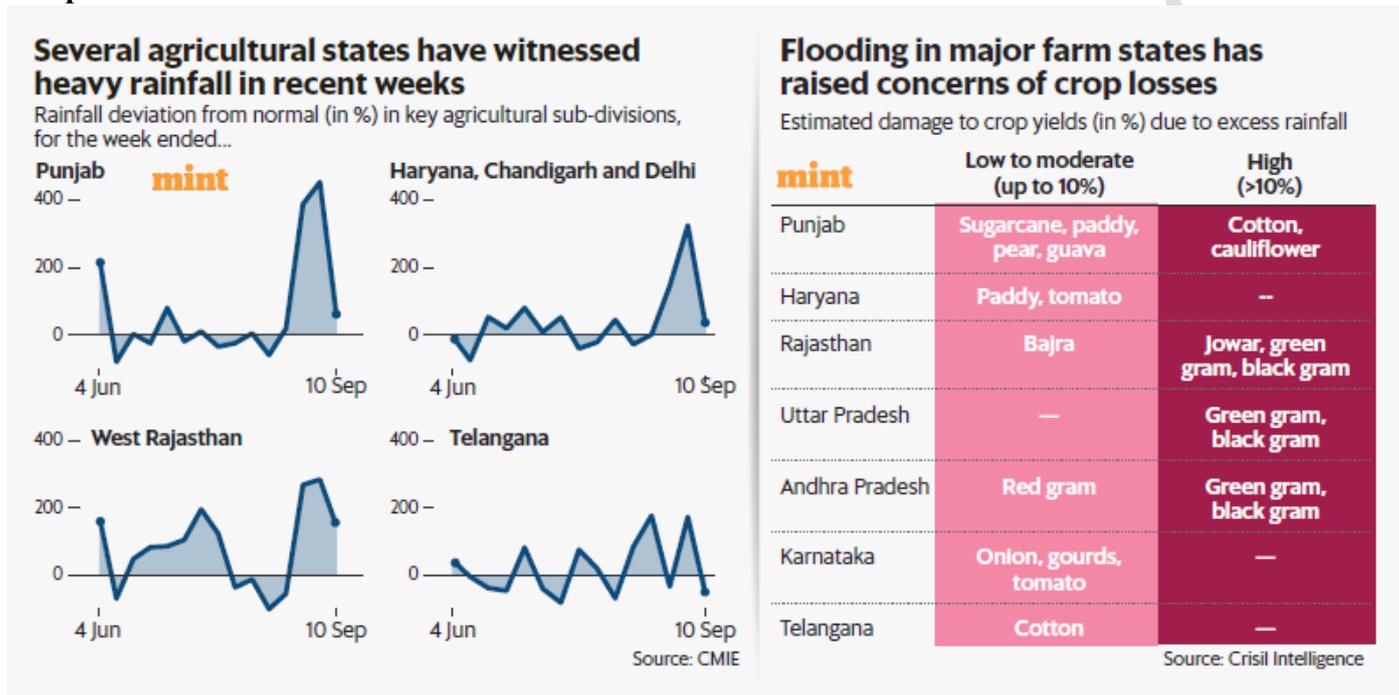


1. Impact of Heavy Rains on Economy – Key Points

• Kharif Season and Rainfall Pattern:

The Kharif cropping season in India started positively, with overall sowing 0.8% higher than normal as of 5 September. Rice sowing was particularly strong at 8.7% above normal. However, excessive and uneven rainfall during the season poses significant risks to crop production, especially until the harvesting period starting in late October. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) defines normal monsoon rainfall as 96%-104% of the long-period average (LPA), with below 96% considered deficient and above 104% as excess.

• Impact on Food Inflation:



Excess rainfall has caused sharp spikes in food prices due to crop damage. Historical cases include onion output damage in 2019, when food inflation surged from 5.1% to 14.2% in three months. In July 2023, food inflation rose from 4.6% to 11.5% because of crop damage and disrupted transport. However, in August 2025, food inflation remained moderate at around 2.2%, close to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) lower tolerance limit, helped by GST rate cuts and economic measures.

• Agricultural Output & Climate Change Link:

About 20% of India's GDP depends on agriculture, which is heavily dependent on monsoon patterns. Over the past decade, India has mostly experienced either above-normal or below-normal monsoons, with normal rainfall rare, attributed to climate change. Strong agricultural output is generally linked to normal or above-normal rainfall years, while below-normal years show weaker growth. In FY25, despite overall rainfall at 108% of LPA, the uneven distribution of rainfall caused significant damage in several states, including Punjab, Haryana, Telangana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh.

• Majorly Affected Crops and States:

Punjab, contributing 11% of India's cereal output, faced the worst floods in decades, with sugarcane, paddy, cotton, and cauliflower yields projected to drop by over 10%. Other affected crops include tomatoes, onions, jowar, and bajra. Cumulative rainfall from 1 June to 10 September exceeded normal levels by 17%-78% in these key states, leading to sowing issues, yield reductions, and supply disruptions.

**• Key Definitions:**

- **Kharif Season:** The monsoon cropping season in India (June-October) when crops like rice, cotton, and sugarcane are grown.
- **Long Period Average (LPA):** The average of monsoon rainfall over a long period (typically 50 years), used to classify monsoon as normal, deficient, or excess.
- **Food Inflation:** The rate of increase in food prices, a critical component of overall inflation, significantly affecting rural and urban households (47% and 40% of their expenses, respectively).

• Constitutional & Legal Provision:

Article 48 of the Indian Constitution (Directive Principles of State Policy) mandates the State to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines. Also, the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, empowers the government to regulate the production, supply, and distribution of essential commodities during times of scarcity or price rise.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance:

Excessive or deficient rainfall during the monsoon season poses serious challenges to India's agriculture-driven economy, directly impacting food inflation, farmer income, and rural livelihood.

2. India–US Trade Talks and Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)

- **Renewed Push for BTA:** India is in *active dialogue* with the US to finalize a **Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)**. PM Modi and former US President Donald Trump have expressed confidence in concluding the deal early, signaling a thaw in strained trade ties. Negotiations with the **EU and New Zealand** are also progressing, reflecting India's multi-pronged trade diplomacy.
- **Background of Trade Tensions:** The US imposed **50% reciprocal tariffs** on Indian goods—the highest after Brazil—and an additional **25% tariff linked to India's Russian oil purchases**. These tariffs hurt **labour-intensive sectors** (engineering, textiles, food products). India avoided retaliation and instead emphasized constructive dialogue.
- **Diversification Strategy:** India aims to reduce dependence on the US market by pursuing FTAs with **Peru, Chile, and Mexico**. About **\$17 billion worth of exports** (nearly 20% of India's total \$86.5 bn exports to the US) could be redirected to these markets without major disruptions.
- **Diplomatic Signaling:** Warmth between Modi and Trump—seen in mutual social media posts—reflects the **strategic dimension** of trade talks. The partnership is framed not just economically but as a step towards unlocking the “limitless potential” of the two economies.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions:**
 - **Article 246 & Seventh Schedule:** International trade and treaties fall under the Union List, giving exclusive power to the central government.
 - **Article 253:** Parliament has the power to make laws for implementing international agreements and treaties.





- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Provides legal framework for regulation and development of India's foreign trade.
- **Definition – Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** An agreement between two or more countries to reduce or eliminate barriers to trade (tariffs, quotas, etc.) to enhance market access and economic integration.

Conclusion

The revival of India–US trade talks marks a critical shift from confrontation to cooperation. Successful conclusion of the BTA could stabilize bilateral trade, ease tariff burdens, and strengthen India's global trade positioning while safeguarding domestic industries.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2:** International Relations (India–US ties, trade diplomacy).
- **GS-3:** Indian Economy, External Sector, WTO-related trade issues.
- **Prelims:** Provisions related to international trade agreements, FTAs, tariff policies.
- **Mains:** Analyze India's strategy of balancing *strategic partnerships* with trade diversification, implications of reciprocal tariffs, and role of FTAs in boosting exports.

3. Fitch Raises India's FY26 GDP Growth Outlook

- **Upgraded Growth Projection:** Fitch Ratings revised India's FY26 GDP growth forecast upward to **6.9%** (from 6.5% earlier), supported by robust momentum in the **services sector** and strong consumption by households and government. India's Q1 FY26 growth stood at **7.8%**, the fastest in five quarters.
- **Nominal vs. Real GDP Trends:** The **GDP deflator growth** (0.9% YoY) was at its lowest since Q3 2019, narrowing the wedge between nominal and real GDP. Fitch cautioned that real GDP may be overstated when wholesale prices and commodity costs are weak, and that this could reverse if prices rise again.
- **Industrial & Services Indicators:** Recent **Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** readings indicate broad economic strength. India's **Manufacturing PMI** rose to 59.3 (a 17-year high), while **Services PMI** touched 62.9 in August 2025, the highest since June 2010, reflecting strong supply-demand alignment and accelerated services activity.
- **External Risks & Trade Tensions:** Rising trade tensions with the US pose risks. Washington imposed **50% tariffs** on Indian imports, including a **25% penalty on Russian crude-linked purchases**. While Fitch expects eventual negotiations to ease levies, the uncertainty is dampening investor sentiment and may impact supply chains and capital flows.
- **Medium-Term Growth Outlook:** While FY26 growth is expected to be strong, Fitch projects moderation: **6.3% in FY27** and **6.2% in FY28**, as the economy operates slightly above potential and growth stabilizes.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions:**

FitchRatings	6.9%
S&P Global	6.5%
	6.4%



- **Article 246 & Seventh Schedule:** Economic and trade policymaking is in the Union List, empowering the Centre.
- **Article 302:** Parliament may impose restrictions on trade and commerce in the public interest.
- **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003:** Provides a framework for fiscal discipline, crucial for sustaining macroeconomic stability amidst growth projections.
- **Definition – GDP (Gross Domestic Product):** The monetary value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders in a given period. **Real GDP** adjusts for inflation, while **Nominal GDP** is measured at current market prices.

Conclusion

Fitch's upgrade reflects confidence in India's service-driven and consumption-led resilience. However, external trade frictions, tariff uncertainties, and reliance on deflator adjustments remain risks. Over the medium term, moderation in growth is expected, highlighting the need for structural reforms and export diversification.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-3:** Indian Economy – Growth, Development, External Sector Challenges.
- **Prelims:** Key economic indicators (GDP, deflator, PMI, FRBM Act).
- **Mains:** Discuss India's growth resilience, the role of services and consumption, and how external trade tensions could shape medium-term outlook.

4. Parliamentary Panel on Fake News

- **Fake News as a Threat:** A parliamentary committee described **fake news** as a “serious threat” to **public order** and the **democratic process**, emphasizing the need for stronger legal mechanisms to combat its spread.
- **Recommendations for Stricter Laws:** The panel suggested **amending penal provisions**, enhancing **fin**es, and ensuring **accountability of media organizations**. The focus is on deterrence through stronger punishment and legal clarity.
- **Institutional Mechanisms:** It recommended that all **print, digital, and electronic media** outlets should have **fact-checking mechanisms** and an **internal ombudsman** to verify content and address grievances.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions:**
 - **Article 19(1)(a):** Guarantees freedom of speech and expression.
 - **Article 19(2):** Permits reasonable restrictions on grounds like public order, security of the State, decency, and integrity of India.
 - **Indian Penal Code (IPC), Section 505:** Penalizes statements conducing to public mischief, including circulation of rumors.





- **Information Technology Act, 2000 (Section 69A):** Empowers the government to block unlawful online content.
- **Press Council of India Act, 1978:** Provides for regulation of the press and ethical journalism standards.
- **Definition – Fake News:** False, misleading, or fabricated information presented as news, intended to deceive, misinform, or manipulate public perception.
- **Challenges:** Enforcement difficulties, balancing **freedom of expression with regulation**, proliferation of digital platforms, and absence of a uniform fact-checking framework.

Conclusion

The panel's recommendations highlight the urgent need for a **robust regulatory framework** to combat fake news while balancing constitutional freedoms. Stricter laws, institutional accountability, and mandatory fact-check systems can safeguard **democracy, public order, and trust in media institutions**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2: Polity & Governance** – Regulation of media, democratic accountability, reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech.
- **GS-3: Internal Security** – Role of misinformation in creating unrest and social disharmony.
- **Prelims:** Constitutional provisions on freedom of expression, IPC/IT Act sections, Press Council Act.
- **Mains:** Analyze the threat of fake news to democracy and suggest legal, institutional, and technological solutions.

5. Concern of Tea Planters over Low-Quality Imports

- **Issue of Low-Quality Imports:** Tea planters are concerned that **duty-free low-quality tea imports**, meant for **re-export purposes**, are being diverted into the **domestic market**. This practice is undermining the quality perception of Indian tea and depressing domestic prices.
- **Economic Impact:** The influx of cheaper imports is harming **domestic growers**, especially small tea planters, by eroding their profit margins. India, being one of the world's largest tea producers, faces risks of losing competitiveness if domestic markets are flooded with inferior quality imports.
- **Demands of Tea Growers:** Industry stakeholders have urged the government to impose either a **100% import duty** or enforce a **minimum import price (MIP)** to protect domestic producers and ensure fair competition.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions:**
 - **Article 301:** Ensures freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse throughout India.
 - **Article 302:** Parliament may impose restrictions on trade in public interest.
 - **Customs Act, 1962:** Governs import duties and trade regulations.
 - **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Empowers the government to regulate imports and exports.





- **Definition – Minimum Import Price (MIP):** A trade policy tool that sets the lowest price at which an imported commodity can enter the domestic market, aimed at preventing dumping of cheap, low-quality goods.
- **Challenges:** Balancing **WTO commitments** on trade liberalization with protection of domestic industries, monitoring misuse of duty-free schemes, and ensuring traceability of imports meant for re-export.

Conclusion

Unchecked inflow of **low-quality duty-free tea** into the domestic market threatens both **price stability and quality reputation** of Indian tea. Imposition of MIP or higher import duty, along with stricter monitoring, is essential to protect domestic growers and preserve India's global standing in tea exports.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-3:** Indian Economy – Agriculture sector issues, external trade, WTO obligations.
- **Prelims:** Provisions of Customs Act, MIP policy, India's position as a global tea producer.
- **Mains:** Examine the impact of cheap imports on Indian agriculture-based industries and discuss policy tools available to safeguard domestic producers under WTO norms.

6. Plastic Waste Management in India

- **Scale of Plastic Waste:** India consumes about **13 million tonnes of plastic annually**, out of which only **60% is recycled**. The remaining **40% consists largely of non-recyclable plastics** such as multilayer chip packets, plastic bags, milk pouches, and wrappers, which often end up in landfills and water bodies.
- **Corporate-Led Initiative – Bottles for Change:** Bisleri International launched the “**Bottles for Change**” program with a **mobile app** that connects citizens, plastic collection agents, and recyclers. The initiative has collected and recycled over **19,300 tonnes of plastic**, promoting source segregation and responsible disposal to support a **circular economy**.
- **Potential of Recycling Technologies:** All **PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) bottles** are recyclable and can be converted into **fibre yarn** (used for fabrics), or **rPET (recycled PET)**, which can be used again for food-grade packaging. Multilayer plastics are repurposed into durable plastic sheets, giving them a “second life.”
- **Key Challenges:** Public indifference towards proper disposal, high prevalence of littering, and lack of efficient collection mechanisms remain major hurdles. Non-recyclable plastics particularly strain the waste management system and contribute to **land and marine pollution**.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions:**
 - **Article 21:** Right to a clean and healthy environment is part of Right to Life.
 - **Directive Principles (Article 48A):** Mandates protection and improvement of the environment.





- **Fundamental Duty (Article 51A(g)):** Imposes duty on citizens to protect the environment.
- **Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 (amended 2022):** Provide for ban on single-use plastics and guidelines for recycling.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Requires producers, importers, and brand owners to manage post-consumer plastic waste.
- **Definition – Circular Economy:** An economic system aimed at eliminating waste and continual use of resources through recycling, reuse, and repurposing, as opposed to a linear “use-and-dispose” model.

Conclusion

Plastic waste poses a serious **environmental and public health challenge** in India. While corporate initiatives like “Bottles for Change” show promise, a combination of **stricter enforcement of EPR, citizen awareness, and innovations in recycling technology** is needed to ensure sustainable plastic waste management and reduce dependence on landfills.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-3:** Environment & Ecology, Sustainable Development, Waste Management.
- **Prelims:** PET, rPET, EPR provisions, Plastic Waste Management Rules.
- **Mains:** Discuss challenges in plastic waste management and evaluate the role of circular economy and EPR in addressing India’s environmental concerns.

7. India’s Approach to Cryptocurrency Regulation

- **No Dedicated Legislation Planned:** The Indian government is leaning towards **not enacting a specific law** to regulate cryptocurrencies, preferring **partial oversight**. The concern is that formal regulation may grant legitimacy to crypto-assets and potentially make them **systemically significant**.
- **RBI’s Concerns:** The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has consistently warned that cryptocurrencies pose **systemic risks** to the financial sector. The government document notes that containing such risks through regulation is practically difficult.
- **Risk of Legitimization vs. Ban:** Regulation could legitimize crypto, leading to wider adoption and integration with mainstream finance, which increases systemic exposure. On the other hand, a **complete ban** can control certain risks but cannot fully prevent **peer-to-peer transfers or decentralized exchange (DEX) trades**.
- **Systemic Risk Explained:** When financial activities or assets become large or interconnected enough to affect the **overall financial system’s stability**, they are termed “systemic.” Cryptocurrencies, due to their volatility and speculative nature, could trigger **financial instability** if mainstreamed.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions:**
 - **Article 246 & Union List (Entry 36 & 46):** Parliament has exclusive power over currency, coinage, and banking regulation.
 - **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934:** Empowers RBI to regulate currency and credit system.





- **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999:** Governs cross-border transactions and could apply to crypto trade.
- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002:** Applies to Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs) from 2023, making KYC and reporting mandatory for exchanges.
- **Definition – Cryptocurrency:** A digital or virtual currency secured by cryptography, typically operating on decentralized blockchain technology, not backed by any central authority or government.

Conclusion

India's cautious stance reflects the balancing act between preventing **financial instability** and addressing the challenges of **unregulated crypto markets**. While outright bans are hard to enforce due to decentralized networks, formal regulation risks legitimizing speculative assets. Thus, India may continue with **partial oversight**, using RBI guidelines, PMLA compliance, and international cooperation under G20 frameworks.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-3:** Economy – Money, Banking, Financial Sector Regulation.
- **Prelims:** FEMA, PMLA, RBI Act provisions, definition of Virtual Digital Assets.
- **Mains:** Debate on whether India should regulate or ban cryptocurrencies; impact on financial stability, investor protection, and innovation in fintech.

8. EU's Move to Phase Out Russian Fuel

- **Shift in Energy Dependence:** The European Union (EU) is considering a **faster phase-out of Russian fossil fuels** as part of its **19th sanctions package** against Moscow. Russia's share in EU gas imports fell to **13% in 2025**, from nearly **45% before the Ukraine war in 2022**.
- **Geopolitical Context:** The move comes under **US pressure** on Europe to reduce reliance on Russian oil and gas. EU leaders view energy independence as crucial to weaken Russia's economic capacity to sustain the war in Ukraine.
- **Sanctions Strategy:** The EU is targeting not only direct imports but also **shadow fleets** (ships used to bypass sanctions) and **third countries** acting as intermediaries in Russian fossil fuel trade. This reflects tightening of sanctions enforcement mechanisms.
- **Russian Response:** The Kremlin maintains that no sanctions will force it to change its course in the war, highlighting the limited direct impact of sanctions on Russian strategic decisions but raising economic costs.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions (India-Relevant):**
 - **Article 246 & Union List:** International trade and foreign affairs fall under Parliament's power.
 - **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Governs India's ability to adjust trade policies in response to global sanctions.
 - **Energy Conservation Act, 2001:** Provides framework for energy efficiency, relevant if India diversifies energy imports.





- **Definition – Sanctions:** Penalties or restrictions imposed by one or more countries on another state to influence its policies, often targeting trade, finance, or energy.

Conclusion

The EU's accelerated move to cut reliance on Russian fossil fuels underscores the **interlinkage of energy security and geopolitics**. While sanctions may not alter Russia's war policy immediately, they push Europe towards **energy diversification, renewable adoption, and stronger trans-Atlantic cooperation**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2:** International Relations – Impact of sanctions, India-EU and India-Russia relations.
- **GS-3:** Energy Security – Diversification of sources, renewable transition, and implications for India's energy strategy.
- **Prelims:** Share of Russian energy in EU imports, definitions of sanctions and shadow fleet.
- **Mains:** Examine how geopolitics influences global energy markets and discuss implications for India's energy security and foreign policy.

9. Delhi Govt. Microchipping Stray Dogs for Rabies Control

- **Major Initiative:** The Delhi government, in collaboration with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, will implant microchips in nearly **10 lakh stray dogs** over two years. The move aims to strengthen **rabies control, dog population management, and digitisation of vaccination records**.

- **Key Features of Programme:**

- Microchips (₹200 each) will store data on vaccination and sterilisation history.
- Handheld scanners (₹4,000 each) will be used to access embedded data.
- Mandatory registration of pet shops and creation of monitoring committees.
- Dog census ordered to ensure accurate planning.

- **Legal & Constitutional Context:**

- **Article 48A (Directive Principles):** Duty of the State to protect and improve the environment, safeguarding forests and wildlife.
- **Article 51A(g) (Fundamental Duty):** Citizens' duty to show compassion for living creatures.
- **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960:** Legal framework for animal welfare and control measures.
- **Supreme Court's directions (2023):** Stray dogs should be sterilised, immunised, and released back to their original locality instead of relocation.

WHY IT'S A TALL ORDER

WHAT DELHI GOVT PROPOSES TO DO

- 1. **Microchipping Of Dogs** Around 10 lakh street dogs in Delhi will be microchipped, in collaboration with UNDP, over the next two years.
- 2. **Rabies Control** A detailed Delhi State Action Plan on rabies will be presented with microchipping as a key tool for rabies control and dog population management.
- 3. **Dog Census And Monitoring** A dog census and monitoring system will be implemented to ensure accurate data and future planning.
- 4. **Prevention Of Dog Bites** Focus on awareness campaigns, prevention measures and digital vaccination monitoring to reduce dog bite cases.
- 5. **Vaccination** Digital system will be introduced to track and strengthen animal vaccinations.
- 6. **Registration Of Pet Shops** Mandatory registration of pet shops will be enforced with a special monitoring committee for strict implementation.

WHAT IT MAY COST

As per rough estimates, the plan could cost around **₹900 crore** over 2 years, including microchipping of dogs, rabies control, dog census and monitoring.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE

- 1. **Microchipping** A microchip is injected under the skin with a needle, similar to a vaccination; usually takes 2-5 minutes. Usually done while the dog is awake, though if the dog is being sterilised, it's often done while under anesthesia.
- 2. **Sterilisation** Males (castration/neuter): The surgery itself often takes 15-30 minutes; plus prep time (sedation, anesthesia, shaving, cleaning, monitoring) of 20-30 minutes; recovery monitoring: 30-60 minutes before the dog is stable enough to go home. Females (spay/ovariohysterectomy): More invasive than neutering; surgery takes 30-60 minutes on average; 20-30 minutes of prep; recovery monitoring: 20-40 minutes.

WHAT IT MEANS

May require procedures on **1,370** dogs a day.

WHY IT'S A CHALLENGE

- 1. Assuming one team works on 15 dogs, as many as 92 teams will need to be formed.
- 2. Multiple mobile clinics, static centres, sterilisation supplies, anaesthesia drugs, post-op observation beds, waste disposal, cold chain for medicines and data-entry staff would be needed.



- **Public Health Significance:** Rabies is a **100% fatal zoonotic disease**, but **100% preventable** through vaccination. Delhi reported **26,334 dog bite cases and 49 rabies cases** this year (till July). India contributes to ~36% of global rabies deaths.
- **Comparative Example:** Bengaluru's civic body has allocated **₹60 crore** for a similar programme (2025–26), following a successful pilot project.

Definition of Key Term

- **Microchipping:** A process of implanting a small electronic chip under an animal's skin that contains a unique identification number, enabling tracking of health, vaccination, and sterilisation records.

Conclusion

The microchipping initiative marks a **tech-driven approach** to rabies elimination and stray dog management in Delhi. By integrating technology, legal mandates, and public awareness, the programme could significantly reduce dog-bite incidents and rabies cases.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2:** Governance, role of local bodies, and UNDP collaboration.
- **GS-3:** Public health, zoonotic diseases, and use of technology in health management.
- **GS-4 (Ethics):** Humane treatment of animals and compassion as a constitutional value.
- **Prelims:** Facts on rabies control, microchipping, constitutional provisions (Art. 48A, 51A(g)), and animal welfare laws.
- **Mains:** Discuss the role of technology and community-based interventions in tackling zoonotic diseases like rabies in India.

10. Demand for Indo-Bhutan River Commission with West Bengal as Member

- **Context of Demand:** West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee urged the Centre to establish an **Indo-Bhutan River Commission** with West Bengal as a member. The demand arises due to recurring floods in **Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, and Malda districts** caused by Bhutan's Sankosh river and other transboundary rivers.
- **Current Institutional Mechanism:** At present, there is **no Indo-Bhutan River Commission**. However, bilateral cooperation exists through:
 - **Joint Group of Experts (JGE)**
 - **Joint Technical Team on Flood Management**
 - **Joint Experts Team on Flood Forecasting**
These groups meet regularly to address flood-related issues on trans-border rivers.
- **Flood Concerns in Bengal:**
 - **North Bengal:** Rivers from Bhutan, Nepal, and Teesta from Sikkim cause flooding.
 - **South Bengal:** Release of water from **Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) reservoirs** often leads to man-made floods.



- The CM highlighted the unique geography of Bengal, comparing it to a "boat" that cannot absorb excess water inflow from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh via the Ganga.
- **Financial and Policy Criticism:** The CM criticised the **Union Budget**, claiming West Bengal was denied allocations for flood control, unlike Assam. She argued that natural disasters affect multiple regions, not just one state.

- **Legal & Constitutional Framework:**

- **Entry 17, List II (State List), Seventh Schedule:** Water is primarily a State subject.
- **Entry 56, Union List:** Union can regulate and develop inter-State rivers and river valleys for public interest.
- **Article 246 & 262:** Parliament has exclusive power to legislate on inter-State water disputes; establishment of tribunals possible.
- **Indo-Bhutan Cooperation:** Falls under **India's foreign policy and treaty obligations**, giving the Union exclusive jurisdiction, though affected states like West Bengal seek representation.



Definition of Key Term

- **River Commission:** A bilateral or multilateral institutional mechanism created to manage water resources, flood control, hydropower, and disaster mitigation in transboundary river basins.

Conclusion

The demand for an **Indo-Bhutan River Commission with state-level representation** reflects the federal challenge of balancing India's foreign policy with the legitimate flood-control concerns of affected states. Strengthening institutional mechanisms and ensuring state participation may reduce recurring flood disasters in Bengal.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2:** Centre-State relations, federalism, foreign policy with neighbors (India-Bhutan cooperation).
- **GS-3:** Disaster management, flood control, water resource management.
- **GS-1 (Geography):** Impact of transboundary rivers on regional geography and settlements.
- **Prelims:** Mechanisms like Joint Group of Experts, constitutional provisions (Art. 262, Union List Entry 56).
- **Mains:** "Discuss the challenges posed by transboundary rivers in India's federal and foreign policy framework. Should states be represented in international river commissions?"

11. The Way Forward on Katchatheevu and Palk Strait Disputes

- **Background & Context:** India's foreign policy (Panchsheel, NAM, SAARC, Neighbourhood First) stresses peace and cooperation. However, disputes with Sri Lanka over **Katchatheevu island** and the **fisheries crisis in the Palk Strait** create friction. PM Modi (April 2025 visit to Colombo) emphasised a "humane approach" — balancing livelihood and ecological sustainability.



- **Fisheries Dispute & Ecological Concerns:**

- Shared waters have led to conflict due to **Indian mechanised bottom trawling**, which depletes resources and harms coral beds and shrimp habitats.
- **UNCLOS** stresses conservation and equitable use; **FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995)** prohibits destructive practices like bottom trawling.
- Sri Lanka banned bottom trawling in 2017, yet Indian trawlers continue, causing livelihood conflicts between **Tamil Nadu's commercial trawler operators** and **artisanal fishers**.

- **Katchatheevu Sovereignty Issue:**

- The **1974 India–Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Treaty** placed Katchatheevu under Sri Lankan sovereignty; treaty is legally binding and final (*pacta sunt servanda*).
- Myths of Indira Gandhi “gifting” the island are false; historic administrative records favoured Sri Lanka. International precedents (e.g., ICJ *Minquiers and Ecrehos* case, Rann of Kutch Arbitration) show sovereignty follows effective jurisdiction, not rhetoric.
- Importantly, **fishing rights are distinct from sovereignty**; they require negotiated arrangements.

- **Legal & Institutional Framework:**

- **Indian Constitutional Provisions:**

- Article 246 & Union List Entry 14 → External affairs including treaties.
- Union List Entry 56 → Regulation of inter-State rivers and resources.
- Article 51(c) → Respect for international law and treaty obligations.



- **International Law:**

- **UNCLOS Article 123** → Semi-enclosed seas (like Palk Bay) mandate cooperation in resource management.
- “Historic waters” doctrine recognised in Indian case law (*Annakumar Pillai vs Muthupayal*, 1904).

- **Proposed Solutions:**

- Quota-based or seasonal fishing rights for Tamil Nadu artisanal fishers with Sri Lankan consent.
- Joint marine research stations (e.g., on Katchatheevu) to promote sustainability.
- Deep-sea fishing promotion within India's **200-nautical-mile EEZ** to reduce near-shore pressure.
- People-to-people engagement: Tamil Nadu communities & Northern Province of Sri Lanka must foster empathy, recalling shared suffering during the civil war.

- **Definition of Key Terms:**



- **Bottom Trawling:** Fishing practice where heavy nets scrape the seabed, causing large-scale ecological damage.
- **Historic Waters:** Maritime zones where states claim stronger sovereign rights based on long usage and recognition.
- **Pacta Sunt Servanda:** Principle of international law that treaties are binding and must be observed in good faith.

Conclusion

The **Katchatheevu issue is legally settled**, but the **fisheries dispute persists** as a livelihood and ecological challenge. India and Sri Lanka must move beyond rhetoric toward **joint management, deep-sea alternatives, and fair quota systems**, aligning with international law while protecting Tamil communities on both sides. If prudently handled, the disputes could transform into **symbols of cooperation rather than conflict**, strengthening India's **Neighbourhood First Policy**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2:** India's neighborhood policy, international treaties, federal-state role in foreign affairs.
- **GS-3:** Sustainable resource management, marine ecology, food security.
- **GS-1 (Geography):** Semi-enclosed seas, Palk Bay ecosystem.
- **Prelims:** 1974 India–Sri Lanka Maritime Treaty, UNCLOS provisions, bottom trawling ban, pacta sunt servanda.
- **Mains:** *“The Katchatheevu issue is settled in law but unsettled in politics. Discuss in the context of India–Sri Lanka relations and the Palk Strait fisheries dispute.”*

12. Political Instability and Economic Challenges in Nepal

- **Background and Political Volatility**
 - Nepal transitioned from a **constitutional monarchy (1990-2008)** to a **constitutional republic (2008 onwards)**, but political instability persists.
 - Since 1990, Nepal has witnessed **30 changes in leadership**, making it one of the world's most unstable democracies.
 - Frequent government collapses and unethical alliances have undermined the federal democratic vision promised by **Jan Andolan I (1990)** and **Jan Andolan II (2005-08)**.
- **Youth Unemployment and Inequality**
 - Nepal's overall unemployment rate (2022-23) was **12.5%**, with youth (15–24 years) facing **22.7% joblessness**.
 - Inequalities exist across **class, geography, and education:**
 - Poorest households' unemployment = 17.2% vs richest = 8.5%.
 - Basic schooling unemployment = 18.1% vs bachelor's degree holders = 6.3%.
 - Rural unemployment often exceeds **20%**, compared to **7.6%** in Kathmandu Valley.



- **Definition – Double Disadvantage:** Many from rural/poor groups neither find jobs nor actively seek them due to lack of opportunities, worsening exclusion.
- **Remittance Dependency and Migration**
 - About **1 in 4 Nepali males** lives abroad, leading to a surge in **female-headed households (37.1% in 2022-23, up from 13.6% in 1995-96)**.
 - Share of households receiving remittances increased from **23.4% (1995-96)** to **76.8% (2022-23)**.
 - **Remittances = 33% of Nepal’s GDP (2024)**, making it the **4th most remittance-dependent economy globally**.
 - Shift in sources: Earlier India (33%) was dominant, now **Qatar (10%), Saudi Arabia (9%), Malaysia (8.6%), UAE (7.1%)** are key destinations.
- **Gen Z Protests: Trigger and Symbolism**
 - Recent protests, sparked by a **social media ban and corruption issues**, turned violent, symbolising “**Gen Z vs Nepo Kids**”.
 - The deeper cause lies in **youth frustration with unemployment, inequality, and systemic corruption**, compounded by lack of stable governance.
- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions**
 - Nepal’s **2015 Constitution** envisions a **federal, democratic, secular republic**, but instability has diluted its spirit.
 - Frequent government changes challenge **Rule of Law and Accountability**.
 - Comparatively, **India’s constitutional design (Article 356 – President’s Rule, strong anti-defection law, stable federal structure)** has provided greater stability.
- **Key Definitions**
 - **Remittance Dependency:** A condition where a significant share of GDP comes from money sent home by migrant workers.
 - **Political Instability:** A situation where frequent changes in government hinder long-term policy-making and governance.
 - **Gen Z Politics:** Political mobilisation led by younger generations born post-1995, demanding transparency, opportunities, and equity.

The data for the charts were sourced from the National Statistics Office of Nepal and the Rulers, Elections and Irregular Governance dataset



Trouble at the top: Protesters climbing the main gate of the Prime Minister's office during the anti-government protests in Kathmandu, Nepal. PTI

Table 1: Countries with the highest number of tenures their heads of governments have had between 1990 and August 2021

Country	Tenures	Average tenure (months)
Nepal	25*	13.7
Vanuatu	22	15.6
Bulgaria	17	21.8
Nauru	17	16.8
Moldova	16	22.8
Japan	15	23.1

*The data excludes two tenures of direct rule by former King Gyanendra. Countries where frequent leadership changes are legally mandated are excluded

Chart 2: Nepal's age-wise unemployment rate in 2022-23 (in %)

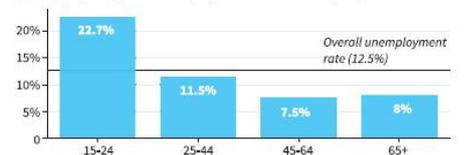
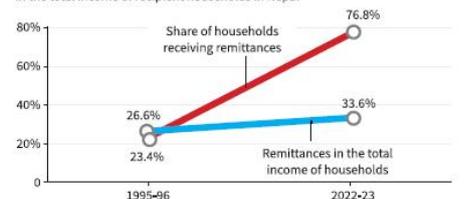


Chart 3: Share of households receiving remittances and the share of remittances in the total income of recipient households in Nepal



Conclusion

Nepal’s **political instability and remittance dependence form a vicious cycle:** unstable governments → weak economic policies → lack of jobs → youth migration → remittance dependence → continued



instability. The Gen Z protests highlight a **generational demand for systemic reforms** in governance, economic diversification, and accountability. Without addressing these structural flaws, Nepal risks further alienation of its youth and erosion of democratic legitimacy.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2:** Comparative politics, India–Nepal relations, constitutional stability.
- **GS-3:** Migration, remittance economics, inequality, youth unemployment.
- **Essay/GS-1:** Socio-economic inequalities, impact of political instability on society.
- **Prelims:** Nepal’s Constitution (2015), Jan Andolans, remittance share in GDP.
- **Mains Qs:** “Discuss how political instability in Nepal has reinforced economic dependence on remittances. What lessons can India draw in terms of constitutional stability and inclusive development?”

13. Manipur Law on Regulating Caste Certificates

- **Background and Objective**
 - The **Manipur Caste Certificate Regulation Law (2024)**, introduced during the ethnic conflict, has received **Presidential assent in July 2025**.
 - Aim: To prevent **fraudulent claims of SC/OBC status** and ensure **uniformity** in the process of issuing caste certificates.
 - **Communities in Manipur:** 7 Scheduled Castes, 4 OBC communities; reservation – **SCs (2%), OBCs (17%), STs (31%)** in education and public employment.
- **Key Provisions of the Law**
 - Establishes procedures for application, scrutiny, and issuance of caste certificates.
 - Provides for creation of **Scrutiny Committees** to verify doubtful certificates.
 - Committees have **suo motu power of verification**, and their decisions are **final and binding**, appealable only before the **High Court**.
 - Until verification is complete, caste certificates remain valid to prevent disruption of benefits.
 - Offences and penalties are prescribed to deter fraudulent claims.
- **Comparison with Other States**
 - **Maharashtra:** Already has a law with **Scrutiny Committees** for caste certificate verification.
 - **Andhra Pradesh:** Empowers **District Collectors** to conduct suo motu verification.
 - Several other states regulate caste certification only through **executive orders and circulars**, not laws.
- **Constitutional and Legal Framework**
 - **Articles 15(4) & 16(4):** Enable special provisions for advancement of socially and educationally backward classes.



- **Article 46:** Directive Principle urging state to promote SCs, STs, and weaker sections.
- **Presidential assent under Article 200 & 201:** Required for state laws affecting central constitutional matters.
- **SC/ST Orders (Modification) Acts:** Define which communities are recognised as SCs/OBCs/STs.
- **Judicial Precedent:** In *Kumari Madhuri Patil v. Addl. Commissioner (1994)*, SC mandated verification committees for caste certificates to prevent misuse.
- **Definition – Scrutiny Committee**
 - A statutory body empowered to examine the **genuineness of caste certificates** and cancel fraudulent ones.
 - Ensures benefits of reservation reach only the **legitimate beneficiaries**.

Conclusion

The law represents a significant step in **institutionalising verification mechanisms** to safeguard affirmative action policies in Manipur. By introducing legal scrutiny, it aims to ensure that reservation benefits are **not cornered by ineligible claimants**, while providing a transparent and fair process. However, its effectiveness will depend on the **capacity, neutrality, and efficiency** of the scrutiny committees.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2:** Constitutional provisions for SCs, STs, OBCs; Centre-State relations (Presidential assent).
- **GS-1 (Society):** Social justice and affirmative action in India.
- **GS-3:** Governance issues in conflict-prone regions like Manipur.
- **Prelims:** Reservation percentages in Manipur; role of scrutiny committees.
- **Mains Qs:** “Discuss the constitutional and legal framework governing caste certificate verification in India. How does Manipur’s recent law attempt to address challenges of fraudulent claims?”

14. Governors Sitting on Bills – SC’s Concern

- **Background of the Case**
 - A **five-judge Presidential Reference Bench** led by CJI B.R. Gavai is hearing the issue of **Governors delaying assent to Bills**, especially after Tamil Nadu alleged its Governor withheld 10 Bills for **four years (since 2020)**.
 - The matter stems from the **April 2024 SC judgment (Tamil Nadu Governor case)**, which prescribed a **3-month timeline** for Governors/President to act on Bills.

Unravelling the order: What the SC said on...

TOP COURT'S AUTHORITY Apex court established its authority to review constitutional functions, defending its prescription of timelines. It said that such a measure balances the need for expedient decision-making with the right of states in a federal system to fulfil their mandate to voters.	GOING FORWARD... ● President can obtain SC's advisory opinion on a bill received from gov, which appears to be "patently unconstitutional". ● States should consider entering into pre-legislation consultation with Centre before introducing bills that might require Presidential assent. ● Governors should respect the will of the people expressed through the legislature.
TIMELINE FOR PRESIDENT It extended the timeline discipline to the central government and held that the President must decide within three months of receiving a bill from a governor. If there is any delay beyond this period, the President's office will be required to convey reasons to the state concerned. “We prescribe that the President is required to take a decision on the bills reserved for his consideration by the Governor within a period of three months.”	GOVERNOR'S POWERS Verdict clarified the constitutional role of governors, stressing that they must act on the advice of the council of ministers as they do not have discretionary powers under Article 200. “Governor cannot be vested with such a power...which would enable him to collude with the Union cabinet and ensure the death of any and all legislation initiated by the state.”



- **Constitutional Provisions Involved**

- **Article 200:** Governor's options on State Bills – (a) give assent, (b) withhold assent, (c) return (if not Money Bill) for reconsideration, (d) reserve for President's consideration.
- **Article 201:** Provides President's role when a Bill is reserved for consideration.
- Issue: If a Governor **sits indefinitely**, Articles 200–201 become ineffective, undermining **legislative supremacy of elected Assemblies**.

- **Supreme Court's Observations**

- CJI questioned how indefinite delay could be called a “false alarm” when Governors sit on Bills for years.
- Justice Narasimha: Withholding assent cannot mean **killing a Bill outright**; there must be a **consultative process** where the Bill is returned to the legislature.
- Justices also compared India's democratic functioning with **instability in Nepal and Bangladesh**, stressing the importance of upholding the Constitution.

- **Centre's Arguments**

- Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta: Governors are not “ornamental heads” and must act **collaboratively** with State governments, not mechanically approve Bills.
- Denied that delays were politically motivated after 2014; said Governors historically worked in a “collaborative manner”.

- **States' Arguments (Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Meghalaya, etc.)**

- Bills represent the **political will of the people**, Governors cannot sit in judgment over constitutionality (*role of judiciary*).
- Indefinite delay violates **federalism, legislative intent, and people's rights** (e.g., delaying healthcare Bills harms citizens).
- Telangana argued that Governors' actions could amount to **discrimination**, especially if assent depends on whether the ruling party in the State matches the Centre's.

- **Definition – Assent to Bills**

- Assent refers to the **formal approval by the Governor/President** making a Bill passed by the legislature into law.
- Constitutional conventions demand **timely decision-making**; undue delay undermines **legislative sovereignty**.

Conclusion

The SC has flagged that **indefinite delays by Governors distort the spirit of Articles 200–201**, weaken State legislatures, and raise federal tensions. The Court appears to favor a **time-bound framework** and a **consultative return process**, preventing Governors from acting as parallel adjudicators of constitutionality.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2:** Indian Constitution – Centre-State relations, powers of Governor, role in legislative process.
- **Polity Prelims:** Articles 200 & 201, options available to Governors, conventions of assent.



- **Mains (GS-2):** *“Examine the constitutional role of Governors in the legislative process. How does the Supreme Court’s recent intervention address concerns of federalism and legislative supremacy?”*
 - **Ethics (GS-4):** Issue of **constitutional morality vs. political partisanship** in discharging constitutional duties.
-

VIDHVATH IAS