



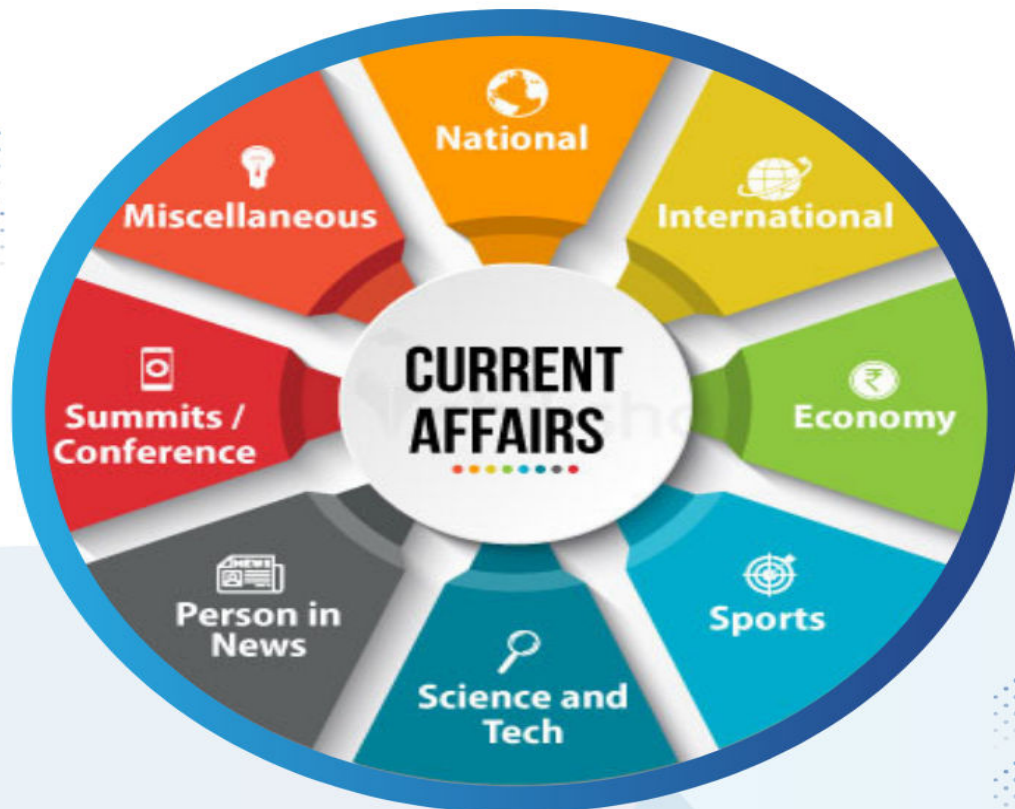
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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY
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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 22/09/2025 (MONDAY)



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1. H-1B Fee Hike and Impact on India's GCCs

1. What are GCCs?

- **Definition:** *Global Capability Centres (GCCs)* are offshore back-end units set up by multinational corporations to leverage skilled manpower for technology, research, and innovation.
- **Evolution:** Initially seen as cost-saving centres, GCCs in India have moved into R&D, product innovation, and collaboration with startups.
- **Scale:** ~1,800 GCCs operate in India employing ~5 million people; projected to become a **\$110 billion sector by 2030** (Nasscom).

2. Why is Trump's H-1B Decision Alarming?

- **Policy Move:** Trump administration announced a **\$100,000 fee** on H-1B visas citing rising U.S. unemployment among computer science/engineering graduates (6.1%–7.5%).
- **Concern for GCCs:** Over **60% of GCCs in India are U.S.-headquartered**; such restrictions could extend beyond visas to offshore units.
- **Catchment Risk:** GCCs hire heavily from the same engineering talent pool that H-1B visa applicants come from.



3. Impact on Indian Talent & Colleges

- **Placement Trends:** GCCs are now **top recruiters** in Indian engineering campuses, offering **₹10–12 lakh packages** (higher than IT service firms' ₹3–5 lakh).
- **Risk:** Any clampdown could affect hiring of both fresh graduates and experienced professionals, leading to reduced job opportunities in a tough employment market.

4. Economic Implications

- **Cost Advantage:** Hiring in India saves **~70% cost per candidate** compared to the U.S. market.
- **Corporate Dilemma:** If the U.S. enforces higher taxes or restrictions on offshore units, parent firms may face rising operational costs, which could either:
 - Reduce hiring in India, or
 - Increase costs passed on to global customers.

5. Constitutional & Legal Provisions (India's Perspective)

- **Article 19(1)(g):** Guarantees freedom to practice any profession and carry out trade/business in India – relevant for protection of GCC operations.
- **FDI Policy:** India encourages **100% FDI under automatic route** in most sectors including IT, creating a liberal environment for GCCs.
- **Labour Codes (2020):** Rationalisation of labour laws improves ease of doing business, indirectly benefiting GCCs.

6. Likely Scenarios



- **Short-term:** Fear of reduced hiring in India, especially for mid-senior tech professionals.
- **Long-term:** Experts suggest Trump may avoid harsh action against GCCs since it will raise costs for U.S. firms and hurt their competitiveness.

Conclusion

The Trump administration's H-1B fee hike has created **uncertainty for GCCs**, a sector critical for India's IT-led growth, job creation, and innovation ecosystem. While GCCs provide cost efficiency and skilled manpower to global firms, political and protectionist pressures in the U.S. can disrupt their growth trajectory.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** India–U.S. relations, impact of protectionist policies on Indian economy.
- **GS Paper 3:** Role of IT sector, employment generation, FDI and globalization.
- **Essay/Interview:** Future of globalisation, skilled migration, and “reverse outsourcing”.

2. Government Oversight on GST Tax Cuts and Profiteering

1. Context of the Reform

- **Goods and Services Tax (GST):** A **comprehensive indirect tax** on manufacture, sale, and consumption of goods and services, introduced in 2017, subsuming multiple indirect taxes.
- **Recent Reform:** Major **tax cuts** announced, in line with PM's Independence Day promise of tax relief. Aim is to provide **direct benefit to consumers** through reduced prices.

2. Concern of Profiteering

- **Definition:** *Profiteering* refers to the practice where businesses retain the tax benefits instead of passing them on to consumers by lowering prices.
- **Government Concern:** Companies may pocket the gain from reduced GST rates rather than lowering product/service prices.
- **Consumer Impact:** Failure to pass on benefits undermines trust in tax reforms and erodes consumer welfare.



3. Government's Monitoring Approach

- **“Discreet Oversight”:** Centre will monitor pricing trends without intrusive inspections.
- **Formal Mechanism Possible:** If profiteering is evident, a statutory enforcement system will be introduced.
- **Corporate Responsibility:** Businesses are expected to **honour public commitments** of price reduction voluntarily.

4. Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 38 (Directive Principles of State Policy):** Ensures promotion of welfare by securing a social order in which justice (economic) informs state policy.
- **Article 39(b):** State shall direct policy towards equitable distribution of resources.



- **Article 265:** No tax shall be levied or collected except by authority of law – highlights legitimacy of GST structure.
- **Anti-Profiteering Provision under GST Law:**
 - *Section 171 of CGST Act, 2017:* Mandates passing on of benefits of tax rate reduction/input tax credit to consumers by way of commensurate reduction in prices.
 - *National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAA):* Established to ensure compliance, though its powers are now being transitioned to the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

5. Key Implications

- **For Consumers:** Potential reduction in household expenditure if benefits are transferred.
- **For Businesses:** Pressure to maintain transparency in pricing and avoid reputational/legal risks.
- **For Government:** Balancing between facilitative monitoring and strict enforcement to sustain credibility of reforms.

Conclusion

The government's discreet but vigilant monitoring of GST tax cuts underscores its dual commitment: ensuring consumer welfare while maintaining business confidence. If profiteering emerges, statutory mechanisms like anti-profiteering provisions will be reinforced to protect public interest.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** Government policies and interventions for development.
- **GS Paper 3:** Indian economy, taxation reforms, consumer protection, and competition policy.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** Corporate ethics, fairness, and transparency in passing benefits to consumers.
- **Essay/Interview:** Issues of tax compliance, consumer rights, and balancing regulation with business freedom.

3. Floods, Food Prices, and Government's Inflation Management

1. Context and Current Situation

- **Recent Floods:** Punjab has witnessed its **worst floods in three decades**, submerging 1.75 lakh acres of farmland, destroying paddy, and affecting ~2,000 villages.
- **Sowing Decline:** Tur (arhar) pulses sown on 4.52 million hectares (↓ from 4.57 million ha), while oilseed acreage dropped by 5.23 lakh ha.
- **Food Price Trends:** August 2025 retail inflation rose to **2.07%** (from 1.61% in July), still well within the RBI's 2–6% comfort band.

2. Government's Measures

- **Daily Monitoring:** 38 essential food items tracked across **555 reporting centres** for real-time data and early intervention.
- **Buffer Stocks:** Sufficient reserves to counter supply shocks and stabilize prices.
- **Forecasting Tools:** Improved models to anticipate disruptions and prevent inflationary spirals.

TABLE 1 CENTRAL POOL STOCKS ON JULY 1			TABLE 2 AREA SOWN UNDER KHARIF CROPS AS ON JULY 11		
	Wheat	Rice*		2025	2024
2017	322.75	264.68	1. Rice	123.68	111.85
2018	418.01	275.57	2. Coarse cereals	196.3	99.78
2019	458.31	354.63	(a) Maize	61.88	59.73
2020	549.91	394.31	(b) Bajra	44.01	29.59
2021	603.56	491.1	(c) Jowar	8	7.39
2022	285.1	472.18	3. Pulses	67.09	53.39
2023	301.45	409.59	(a) Arhar	25.42	27.38
2024	282.61	484.99	(b) Urad	11.46	11.54
2025	358.78	556.55	(c) Moong	23.36	12.19
Norm**	275.8	135.4	4. Oilseeds	137.27	139.82
* In lakh tonnes. Excludes rice equivalent of non-edible pulses. ** Minimum operational stockpile strategic reserve for July 1.			(a) Soyabean	99.03	107.78
Source: Department of Food and Public Distribution			(b) Groundnut	32.99	28.04
			(c) Sesamum	4.47	3.11
			5. Cotton	92.83	95.22
			6. Sugarcane	55.16	54.88



- **Proactive Procurement:** Readiness to procure grains and pulses to maintain supply stability.

3. Concern of Profiteering & Inflationary Pressures

- **Consumer Price Index (CPI):** Food prices are a critical component influencing overall inflation trends.
- **Risk Factors:** Localized crop losses (floods, reduced sowing in pulses and oilseeds) could create temporary price pressures.
- **Key Observation:** Tomato prices surged 16.9% in August, showing how localized shocks can distort food inflation.

4. Constitutional & Legal Framework

- **Article 38:** Directive for the State to promote welfare through economic justice.
- **Article 39(b):** Ensures equitable distribution of material resources to subserve the common good.
- **Essential Commodities Act, 1955:** Provides government authority to regulate supply, distribution, and pricing of essential items to protect consumers.
- **Food Security Act, 2013:** Ensures subsidized food grains for vulnerable sections, a buffer against inflation.
- **Monetary Policy Framework Agreement (2015):** Empowers RBI to maintain CPI inflation within the 2–6% target band.

5. Economic Implications

- **RBI's Monetary Policy:** Stable food prices give RBI space for possible rate cuts (as forecasted by Goldman Sachs).
- **Policy Credibility:** Improved forecasting and institutional readiness strengthen market confidence.
- **Consumer Welfare:** Government's proactive steps help contain inflation and protect households from shocks.

Conclusion

Despite severe floods and reduced sowing in pulses and oilseeds, the government's robust monitoring, buffer stocks, and forecasting tools are expected to **contain food inflation at least until July 2026**. This provides stability to households, credibility to economic policy, and flexibility to the RBI for monetary interventions.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** Government policies for welfare, disaster response in agriculture.
- **GS Paper 3:** Inflation management, agriculture, food security, monetary policy.
- **Essay/Interview:** Balancing disaster impacts with economic stability; role of proactive governance in inflation control.

4. PM's Call for Swadeshi Movement and MSME Support

1. Context and Announcement

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to **states and MSMEs** to strengthen the **Swadeshi (self-reliance) movement** by producing **globally competitive, high-quality domestic goods**.



- The initiative aligns with the larger **Atmanirbhar Bharat** strategy and the vision of **Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047**.
- Citizens, particularly the **neo-middle class (250 million people who moved out of poverty in the last 11 years)**, will benefit from **GST rate cuts** and **income tax relief (up to ₹12 lakh)**.

2. Economic Measures Highlighted

- **GST Rate Reduction:** Effective from Monday, expected to reduce prices of goods/services and make aspirational consumption (housing, travel, durables) more accessible.
- **Dual Benefit:** Combination of GST cuts and direct tax relief expected to generate consumer savings of **₹2.5 trillion**, boosting domestic demand.
- **Strategic Focus:** Shift toward a **domestically oriented economy**, balancing production and consumption amid global uncertainties and de-globalization trends.

3. Swadeshi, Atmanirbharta and Policy Goals

- **Swadeshi (Consumption Focus):** Using domestically made goods as a matter of national pride and economic strength.
- **Atmanirbharta (Production Focus):** Promoting local manufacturing to reduce dependence on imports of raw materials, intermediates, and finished products.
- **MSME Role:** As backbone of India's economy, MSMEs are expected to drive innovation, local job creation, and competitiveness in global markets.

4. Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 19(1)(g):** Right to practice any profession or to carry on trade/business – protects MSMEs' economic activities.
- **Article 38 & 39(b):** Directives for equitable economic development and distribution of resources.
- **Article 301:** Freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse throughout India – crucial for MSMEs and domestic supply chains.
- **MSME Development Act, 2006:** Provides legal framework for promotion, development, and competitiveness of MSMEs.
- **GST Act, 2017:** Uniform indirect tax structure to promote ease of doing business and reduce cascading taxes.

5. Challenges and Criticism

- **States' Concern:** Demand for extension of **GST compensation period** by five years remains unresolved.
- **Opposition's View:** Congress termed GST as a "Growth Suppressing Tax" and criticized government's sole ownership of reforms.
- **Practical Hurdles:** MSMEs face issues of credit access, compliance burden, and global competitiveness despite reforms.

Conclusion



The Prime Minister's call for a **Swadeshi-led economic movement** underlines India's strategy to build a **self-reliant, consumption-driven economy** while safeguarding citizens' purchasing power through tax relief. However, addressing states' fiscal concerns and MSMEs' structural challenges will be critical for sustained growth and achieving the goal of **Viksit Bharat**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** Centre-State fiscal relations, cooperative federalism (GST compensation issue).
- **GS Paper 3:** MSMEs, Atmanirbhar Bharat, economic reforms, domestic manufacturing, and inflation management.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics):** National pride, ethical consumption, and citizen responsibility in supporting self-reliance.
- **Essay/Interview:** "Swadeshi in the 21st century: From nationalism to economic self-reliance."

5. US Sanctions on Chabahar Port and India's Regional Ambitions

1. Context and Background

- **Chabahar Port:** Located in Iran's southeastern coast on the Gulf of Oman, it is India's strategic maritime gateway to **Afghanistan and Central Asia**, bypassing Pakistan.
- **US Waiver (2018):** Under the **Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA)**, Indian operations at Chabahar were exempted from sanctions, recognizing its role in Afghanistan's development.
- **Recent Development (Sept 2025):** The US announced withdrawal of this waiver, effective 29 September, bringing Indian operations under the scope of sanctions.



2. Strategic Importance of Chabahar for India

- **Regional Connectivity:** Provides direct access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, critical for trade, energy, and security.
- **Counterbalance to Gwadar Port:** Serves as India's response to China's Gwadar Port in Pakistan, part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- **Geopolitical Lever:** Strengthens India's engagement with Iran and enhances its presence in Eurasia amid China's expanding influence.

3. India's Investments and Commitments

- **Initial Pledge:** \$85 million for equipping the Shahid Beheshti terminal, with \$24 million already delivered.
- **Recent Agreement (May 2024):**
 - \$120 million for additional equipment.
 - \$250 million line of credit for port-linked infrastructure (cargo storage, container handling, logistics).



- Demonstrates India's **long-term strategic and financial commitment** to the project.

4. Implications of Waiver Withdrawal

- **Operational Risks:** Cargo delays due to compliance checks; increased insurance costs; banking restrictions on transactions.
- **Investment Uncertainty:** Foreign investors may withdraw or avoid participation in port-related ventures.
- **Trade Impact:** Disruption in shipments of essential commodities and construction materials to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- **Strategic Setback:** Weakens India's regional ambitions and limits its counterbalance to China in the Indian Ocean Region.

5. Constitutional & Legal Dimensions

- **Article 51 (Directive Principles of State Policy):** Advocates promotion of international peace, respect for international law, and fostering friendly relations among nations – directly linked to India's external engagements.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Governs India's external trade policies, impacted by sanctions regimes.
- **Maritime India Vision 2030:** Emphasizes port-led connectivity and India's aspiration to be a major global maritime player.
- **International Law Angle:** US secondary sanctions raise questions on **extra-territorial application of domestic laws**, often criticized in global forums.

Conclusion

The US's revocation of the Chabahar sanctions waiver poses both **economic and strategic risks** for India. It threatens India's connectivity plans to Afghanistan and Central Asia, undermines efforts to counterbalance China's Gwadar Port, and complicates its geopolitical balancing with the US and Iran. India will need to explore diplomatic channels, diversify regional partnerships, and strengthen alternative connectivity projects to safeguard its regional ambitions.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2:** International relations, India-Iran-US relations, regional connectivity.
- **GS Paper 3:** Infrastructure development, port-led trade strategy, energy security.
- **Essay/Interview:** "Connectivity as the cornerstone of India's regional strategy" / "Sanctions and sovereignty: challenges of external dependence."

6. Govt May Allow Green Project Exits Without Penalty

1. Policy Shift in Renewable Energy (RE) Sector

- The government is considering permitting **renewable energy developers to surrender stalled projects** without losing their **performance bank guarantees (PBGs)**, provided **power purchase agreements (PPAs)** are not signed.



- Earlier, abandoning projects led to forfeiture of bank guarantees, typically ranging between ₹22–39 lakh per MW.

2. Current Issue: Unsigned PPAs & Stalled Projects

- Around **30 GW of renewable energy capacity** (mainly solar) remains stalled due to **unsigned PPAs and PSAs**.
- Reasons:
 - Delays in **transmission connectivity**.
 - **Falling tariffs** in newer projects making older bids unattractive to DISCOMs.
 - Grid stability issues with standard solar projects.

3. Institutional & Legal Context

- **Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs):** Mandated under **Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022**, requiring designated consumers (DISCOMs, industries) to procure a share of electricity from non-fossil sources.
- Non-compliance attracts **penalties** for states/DISCOMs.
- Centre urging states to sign PPAs to meet RPO targets and reduce backlog.



4. Strategic Energy Goals

- India aims to install **50 GW renewable energy annually till 2027-28**, targeting **500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030** (as reiterated by PM on 15 August 2024).
- Shift towards **Firm and Dispatchable Renewable Energy (FDRE)** projects — renewable energy integrated with **battery energy storage systems (BESS)** to address intermittency and ensure grid reliability.
- Government may **remodel relinquished projects** into hybrid (solar + wind + storage) formats.

5. Key Definitions

- **Power Purchase Agreement (PPA):** A long-term contract between a power producer and a buyer (usually DISCOMs) for electricity supply.
- **Bank Guarantee (BG):** A financial instrument submitted by developers to ensure contract performance; forfeited if obligations are not met.
- **Firm and Dispatchable Renewable Energy (FDRE):** Renewable energy bundled with storage solutions to deliver reliable, continuous power.

Conclusion

The proposed relaxation aims to reduce financial stress on developers and unclog stalled projects, allowing the sector to focus on more advanced, storage-integrated green energy projects. It also reflects India's push towards **flexible and resilient energy systems** to achieve long-term sustainability targets.

UPSC Relevance



- **GS-3 (Economy, Environment, Energy Security):** Renewable energy targets, challenges of grid stability, financing mechanisms.
- **Acts & Policies:** Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022; National Renewable Energy targets.
- **Current Affairs:** India's energy transition strategy, climate commitments under **Paris Agreement** and **COP summits**.

7. The Two-State Solution: Global Push vs Regional Reality

1. Global Recognition Efforts

- France, the U.K., Australia, Canada, Belgium, and others plan to **recognize Palestine as a state**, aiming to revive the two-state solution.
- A **UNGA declaration (Sept 12, 2024)** backed by 142 countries called for:
 - Ceasefire in Gaza.
 - Release of Israeli hostages.
 - Disarmament of Hamas.
 - Implementation of the two-state solution.
 - Normalization of Israel–Arab relations.
- Over **140 countries already recognize Palestine**, though Israel and the U.S. strongly oppose unilateral recognition.

2. Ground Reality: Diminishing Feasibility

- Public support for two states has collapsed among both Israelis and Palestinians (once majority support in 1990s, now minority).
- **Israel's military campaign in Gaza and expansion of settlements in the West Bank** have deepened mistrust.
- Far-right Israeli ministers openly call for **annexation of the West Bank**, undermining prospects of partition.

3. Historical Context

- The **Oslo Accords (1990s)** envisioned partition broadly along pre-1967 borders.
- U.S.-brokered negotiations in **2000 and 2008** failed, eroding faith in the process.
- Alternative models like **confederation or binational state** lack serious traction.

4. Legal and International Dimensions

- **Right to Self-Determination:** Recognized under **UN Charter** and **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**.
- **UNGA Resolution 181 (1947)** originally recommended partition of British Mandate Palestine into Jewish and Arab states.
- **Geneva Conventions (1949)** prohibit annexation and settlement in occupied territories.





- Recognition of Palestine is seen as symbolic but may invite **Israeli retaliation** (more checkpoints, settlement expansion, annexation moves).

5. Key Definitions

- **Two-State Solution:** A diplomatic framework for establishing an independent State of Palestine alongside Israel, usually based on 1967 borders with land swaps.
- **Annexation:** The forcible incorporation of occupied territory into a state's sovereign territory, illegal under international law.
- **Settlements:** Israeli civilian communities built on occupied Palestinian land, considered unlawful under international law.

Conclusion

While the **international community is renewing efforts** to secure peace via a two-state framework, the **domestic political realities** in Israel and Palestine make it increasingly unviable. The war in Gaza, settlement expansion, and political radicalization risk burying the idea permanently.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2 (IR):** India's West Asia policy, Israel–Palestine issue, UN role in conflict resolution.
- **GS-1 (World History & Post-War World Order):** Partition plans, decolonization, self-determination struggles.
- **Current Affairs:** Global diplomacy, recognition of Palestine, implications for Middle East geopolitics, India's balancing act between Israel & Arab nations.

8. Government Study on 'Smog-Eating' Technology to Combat Air Pollution

1. Context and Initiative

- **Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa** announced a government-led study on **titanium oxide-based "smog-eating" photocatalytic coatings**.
- The technology can be applied to **roads, pavements, and public spaces** to reduce harmful pollutants like **nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and hydrocarbons**, improving air quality.
- Such technology has been used abroad but is **yet to be implemented in India**.

2. Technology Details

- **Photocatalytic Coatings:** Titanium dioxide reacts with sunlight to **break down air pollutants into less harmful compounds**.
- **Potential Benefits:**
 - Reduction in urban smog.
 - Cleaner air in **high-traffic corridors, markets, and densely populated areas**.
- **Safety & Sustainability:** The study will assess potential **environmental and health impacts** along with long-term durability.





3. Implementation Plan

- Stepwise approach:
 1. Select a **scientific partner** within 30 days.
 2. Conduct **field trials** on real city stretches.
 3. Deliver a **final report within six months**.
- Post evaluation, a **Cabinet proposal** may be moved for **city-wide deployment** if found effective and cost-efficient.

4. Policy & Legal Dimensions

- **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981:** Provides framework for reducing air pollution in cities.
- **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP, 2019):** Mandates cities to reduce particulate matter and improve air quality; this initiative aligns with NCAP goals.
- Supports **Article 21 of the Constitution (Right to Life)**, which encompasses the right to **clean air and a healthy environment**.

5. Key Definitions

- **Photocatalytic Coating:** A surface treatment using photocatalysts like titanium dioxide that **degrades pollutants in the presence of light**.
- **Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂):** A toxic gas released from vehicles and industry; contributes to smog and respiratory illnesses.
- **Hydrocarbons:** Organic compounds from fossil fuel combustion; contribute to ozone formation and air pollution.

Conclusion

The initiative represents a **science-driven, people-first approach** to air pollution management in Delhi. If successful, it could serve as a **model for urban air quality improvement** across India, combining technology, governance, and public health safeguards.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-3 (Environment, Science & Technology):** Air pollution control measures, emerging technologies, NCAP targets.
- **GS-2 (Polity & Rights):** Constitutional right to clean environment (Article 21).
- **Current Affairs:** Delhi's air quality management, urban pollution mitigation strategies, technology adoption in public governance.

9. NGT Orders Action on Bandhwari Landfill Leachate Discharge

1. Context and Issue

- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** flagged serious violations at the **Bandhwari landfill in Gurugram**.



- **Untreated leachate** from the landfill is overflowing and being discharged into **forested areas** through **kutchha drains and concrete pipes**, posing environmental hazards.
- The NGT has directed authorities to take “**immediate remedial action**” to prevent further contamination.

2. Inspection Findings

- **Three leachate storage ponds** exist at the site, but **no impervious lining** has been provided to prevent **groundwater contamination**.
- Joint inspection (dated September 17) highlighted **pathetic conditions** and **non-compliance with environmental norms**.
- Leachate discharge into plantations and forested areas was **visible in photographs** attached to the report.

3. Legal and Policy Framework

- **Environment Protection Act, 1986**: Mandates proper disposal of hazardous and municipal waste to prevent pollution of land and water bodies.
- **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016**: Require landfills to have leachate collection and treatment systems with impervious liners.
- **National Green Tribunal Act, 2010**: Empowers NGT to adjudicate cases on environmental protection and enforce remedial action.



4. Key Definitions

- **Leachate**: Contaminated liquid produced when water percolates through waste in a landfill, containing dissolved and suspended pollutants.
- **Kutchha Drain**: Unlined or temporary drainage channels that can carry untreated wastewater or leachate into nearby areas.
- **Impervious Lining**: A non-porous barrier (like HDPE liners) used in landfills to prevent seepage of contaminants into soil and groundwater.

5. Environmental Implications

- Untreated leachate can **pollute groundwater, soil, and nearby ecosystems**.
- Discharge into forests threatens **plantation health, biodiversity, and local communities** relying on groundwater.
- Persistent non-compliance can lead to **long-term ecological damage** and public health risks.

Conclusion

The NGT's intervention highlights the critical need for **strict enforcement of waste management norms**. Proper leachate treatment, use of impervious liners, and monitoring are essential to prevent environmental degradation and safeguard public health.

UPSC Relevance



- **GS-3 (Environment & Ecology):** Solid waste management, pollution control measures, NGT functioning, and legal frameworks.
- **GS-2 (Polity & Governance):** Role of tribunals and regulatory authorities in environmental governance.
- **Current Affairs:** Gurugram Bandhwari landfill, urban waste management challenges, pollution control initiatives in India.

10. Karnataka Backward Classes Survey and Masking of Christian Subcastes

1. Context and Issue

- The **Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes (KSCBC)** is conducting a **socio-educational survey** of backward classes across the state, excluding the Greater Bengaluru Authority area initially.
- The survey follows controversy over the **inclusion of new castes** under the Christian subcaste category. To address concerns, **33 Christian subcastes have been masked** in the mobile enumeration application; **five subcastes will remain listed**.
- The survey aims to collect household-level socio-educational data for policymaking and planning.

2. Survey Implementation

- Survey coverage: **2 crore households**, mapped using electricity connections.
- Personnel involved: Over **two lakh teachers** as enumerators.
- Methodology: Door-to-door visits with a **set of 60 questions**, supplemented by an **online participation option**.
- Timeline: Expected to be completed **within two weeks**.

Karnataka

People mention Christian with caste, we cannot exclude them: Karnataka Backward Classes Chairman on caste survey

Karnataka State Backward Classes Chairman Madhusudan Naik has responded to the BJP's objection to the socio-economic survey including the word Christian along with caste names as a category.

Written by : IANS

Published: 16th Sep, 2025 at 8:36 PM

3. Caste List and Classification

- Original caste list: **1,413 castes**, later increased to **1,561** after petitions.
- Current official count:
 - **Backward Classes (BCs): 887**
 - **Scheduled Castes (SCs): 101**
 - **Scheduled Tribes (STs): 50**
- Christian subcastes like **Lingayat Christian, Kuruba Christian, Brahmana Christian, and Vokkaliga Christian** were at the center of controversy.

4. Legal and Policy Context

- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - **Article 15(4):** Allows the state to make special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes.



- **Article 16(4):** Permits reservation in public employment for backward classes.
- **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders:** Define caste-specific benefits.
- **Key Definition:**
 - **Backward Classes (BCs):** Social groups identified as socially and educationally disadvantaged, eligible for affirmative action under law.
- Religion vs. caste: While **law recognizes caste status after conversion** to a religion, the **caste identity itself does not change**. The religion column is not part of enumeration by the commission.

5. Background and Precedent

- Self-declaration of caste is **voluntary** for respondents.
- The survey continues the methodology of the **2015 survey conducted by the H. Kantharaj Commission**.
- Objective: Identify socio-educational status to inform **reservation policies, welfare schemes, and resource allocation**.

Conclusion

The Karnataka BC survey, including selective masking of sensitive subcastes, reflects efforts to maintain **data integrity while managing political sensitivities**. It highlights the interplay between **social justice, affirmative action, and census enumeration practices** in India.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2 (Polity & Governance):** Role of Backward Classes Commissions, caste surveys, reservation policies.
- **GS-1 (Society):** Social stratification, backward classes, and minority communities.
- **Current Affairs:** Karnataka caste survey 2025, socio-educational data collection, policy implications for BCs and Christians.

11. Government Maps 12,000 HSN Codes to Ministries

1. Context and Objective

- The **Government of India** has prepared a **guidebook mapping 12,167 HSN (Harmonised System of Nomenclature) codes to 31 ministries and departments**.
- Aim: To **promote a data-driven regulatory framework**, streamline approvals, and enhance **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)**.
- The initiative addresses challenges in **trade negotiations, import substitution, and industry grievance redressal** due to unclear ministry responsibilities for specific goods.

2. HSN Code: Definition and Significance

- **Definition:** HSN Code is an internationally standardized system for classifying goods. Each product is assigned a unique code for **customs, taxation, and trade purposes**.
- Significance:



- Facilitates **uniform classification of goods globally**.
- Supports **trade data analysis, monitoring imports/exports, and policy formulation**.
- Helps in aligning **products with relevant ministries or departments** for regulation and support.

3. Implementation and Coverage

- **Scope:** Covers **12,167 product codes** across sectors.
- **Responsible entities:** 31 ministries and departments, each assigned specific HSN codes for regulatory oversight.
- **Expected benefits:** Streamlined **regulatory clearances**, faster **industry engagement**, and improved **policy decision-making**.

4. Policy and Legal Relevance

- **Ease of Doing Business (EoDB):** Initiative supports India's international ranking by simplifying regulatory procedures.
- **Trade and Commerce Acts:** The mapping aligns with the **Customs Act, 1962**, and **GST (Goods and Services Tax) rules**, which rely on HSN codes for taxation and classification.
- **Data-Driven Governance:** Enhances compliance with **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** and **digital governance standards**.

5. Strategic Importance

- Supports **trade negotiations and import substitution** by clearly identifying responsible ministries.
- Facilitates **policy alignment with national economic priorities** and sectoral strengths.
- Encourages **efficient grievance redressal** for industry and trade stakeholders.

Conclusion

The HSN code mapping initiative exemplifies **digital and data-driven governance**, enabling precise regulatory oversight, reducing procedural delays, and supporting **India's trade and economic policy goals**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2 (Governance & Polity):** Digital governance, regulatory reforms, Ease of Doing Business.
- **GS-3 (Economic Development):** Trade facilitation, import-export classification, sectoral policy alignment.
- **Current Affairs:** Initiative reflects India's push for **data-driven decision-making and trade competitiveness**.

12. Ending Elite Impunity in Sri Lanka: The Wickremesinghe Case

1. Context and Incident

- Former Sri Lankan President **Ranil Wickremesinghe** was arrested in August 2025 for **allegedly misusing public funds** (~16.2 million LKR or \$50,000) during a personal stopover in the UK.
- The expenditure was linked to a university event honoring his wife.



- Wickremesinghe was remanded for four days and later released on bail.

2. Public and Political Reaction

- Supporters allege **political victimization**, arguing the expenditure falls under presidential perks.
- International allies, including leaders from India and Maldives, expressed concern over the arrest.
- The public perception, however, highlights **the excesses of political elites**, with the misused amount equating to significant socio-economic value for ordinary citizens.

3. Demand for Accountability

- Reflects broader anti-corruption sentiment in Sri Lanka, dating back to **mass protests of July 2022** demanding transparency and accountability.
- Past political movements (Yahapalana government 2015, election of Gotabaya Rajapaksa 2019) underscore **public insistence on curbing elite corruption**.
- Citizens increasingly expect politicians to **justify all expenditures**, especially public funds.

4. Legal and Governance Implications

- While the charges against Wickremesinghe may be considered **trivial relative to other corruption cases**, the arrest signals a **shift toward enforcement of probity in public office**.
- Demonstrates the **rule of law principle**, where **even powerful political figures are subject to legal scrutiny**.
- Constitutional relevance: aligns with principles of **accountable governance under Articles 14 (Equality before law) and public fiduciary responsibility** in public office.



5. Wider Significance

- The move reinforces the **erosion of elite immunity** in Sri Lanka and sets a precedent for **political transparency and probity**.
- It highlights the **citizen-centric demand for governance**, where accountability is measured not by political stature but by responsible public service.
- Raises challenges for the incumbent **National People's Power (NPP) government**, which must also ensure its own ministers maintain high standards of probity.

Conclusion

- The arrest of Wickremesinghe symbolizes a **cultural and political shift** in Sri Lanka toward reducing elite impunity and strengthening accountability.
- Even if charges are minor, the **message is systemic**: no public official is above scrutiny, reinforcing public trust in governance mechanisms.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2 (Governance & Polity)**: Transparency, accountability, rule of law, citizen-centric governance.



- **GS-3 (Economic Development):** Corruption's socio-economic impact and public resource misuse.
- **Current Affairs:** Reflects anti-corruption movements, political accountability in developing democracies, and the role of citizen activism in shaping governance norms.

13. Supreme Court Presidential Reference: Timelines for Governor/President on State Bills

1. Background of the Reference

- The **Presidential reference (May 2025)** seeks the Supreme Court's opinion on 14 questions regarding **Articles 200 and 201** of the Constitution.
- Triggered by the **April 2025 judgment in State of Tamil Nadu vs Governor of Tamil Nadu**, which prescribed timelines for Governors and the President to act on State Bills:
 - Governor: 3 months to act (assent, withhold, or reserve).
 - President: 3 months to decide on reserved Bills.
- The government questioned the Court's authority to prescribe timelines not mentioned in the Constitution.

2. Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 200:** On receiving a State Bill, the Governor may:
 1. Give assent (Bill becomes law).
 2. Withhold assent (Bill fails).
 3. Return Bill for reconsideration (if advised by Council of Ministers).
 4. Reserve Bill for President's consideration.
- **Article 201:** President may assent to, withhold, or suggest reconsideration of reserved Bills.
- **Article 163(1) & (2):** Governor acts on **Council of Ministers' advice**, except in matters requiring discretion; such discretionary decisions are final and non-justiciable.
- **Definitions:**
 - *Governor's discretion:* Exceptional powers in rare cases, e.g., Bill contravening the Constitution.
 - *Assent:* Formal approval making a Bill law.



3. Key Commission Recommendations

- **Sarkaria Commission (1987):** Governor's discretion limited to rare unconstitutional cases; President should dispose of reserved Bills within 6 months.
- **Punchhi Commission (2010):** Governor should decide on Bills within 6 months.

4. Arguments and Controversies

- **Centre's stance:** Governor has discretionary powers under Articles 163 and 200; courts cannot fix timelines.



- **Opposition-ruled States:** Governors have selectively delayed assent/reserved Bills, undermining elected governments. Such delays cannot be termed discretion and violate federal principles.

5. Judicial Interpretation

- Supreme Court, in April 2025, emphasized:
 - Article 200 uses “**shall**”, implying non-discretionary duty in most cases.
 - Delays beyond reasonable periods affect **popular mandate and democratic governance**.
 - Timelines prescribed (3 months) align with past judgments (e.g., **K.M. Singh case, 2020**) and recommendations of commissions.

6. Way Forward and Federal Implications

- The **Governor’s office** should not undermine elected State governments; federalism is a **basic feature** of the Constitution.
- Timelines ensure **accountability, prevent politicization, and respect democratic mandate**.
- Courts may continue to intervene when unreasonable delays occur, balancing constitutional authority and democratic principles.

Conclusion

- The Presidential reference underscores the **tension between constitutional discretion and democratic accountability**.
- Prescribing timelines strengthens **federalism, reduces arbitrariness, and safeguards the legislative process**.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS-2 (Polity & Governance):** Articles 163, 200, 201; federalism; Governor’s role; separation of powers; judicial review.
- **Current Affairs:** Recent Supreme Court judgments on Governor-State relations, legislative procedure, and federal balance.
- **Answer Strategy:** Can be used in Mains to discuss **federalism vs discretion, role of constitutional authorities, and judicial intervention**.