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

## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION**

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## 1. India–U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) – A Launchpad for Growth

### 1. Introduction – Context and Background

- The India–U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) represents a landmark step in strengthening bilateral economic relations between India and the United Kingdom.
- British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, during his first official visit to India after assuming office, described the agreement as “*the biggest deal since the U.K. left the European Union.*”
- The two-day visit includes engagements with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and participation in the *Global Fintech Fest* in Mumbai.

### 2. Key Features and Significance of the Agreement

- **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA):** A formal pact aimed at reducing trade barriers, simplifying investment procedures, and enhancing collaboration in multiple economic sectors.
- The agreement seeks to make bilateral trade *quicker, cheaper, and more efficient*, reflecting a strategic economic partnership post-Brexit.
- **Scale and Scope:** Expected to be the largest trade deal for both India and the U.K., covering sectors such as technology, innovation, education, defence, and climate cooperation.
- Starmer termed it a “*launchpad for growth*,” emphasizing mutual benefits and the long-term potential for economic expansion.

### 3. Vision 2035 and Strategic Roadmap

- The agreement aligns with the *India–U.K. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership* under **Vision 2035**, a ten-year roadmap of cooperation.

#### • Key Pillars of Vision 2035:

- Trade and Investment
- Technology and Innovation
- Defence and Security
- Climate and Energy
- Health and Education
- People-to-People Relations
  - The two Prime Ministers will review progress under these domains, ensuring time-bound implementation of agreed initiatives.



### 4. Economic and Geopolitical Implications

- **For India:** Strengthens India’s position as a global economic hub and aligns with its vision of becoming the *third-largest economy by 2028*.
- **For the U.K.:** Aids in diversifying trade partnerships beyond the European Union, reinforcing its *Global Britain* strategy.
- Enhances mutual access to markets, boosts innovation exchanges, and supports start-ups and MSMEs on both sides.
- Promotes geopolitical alignment between two democratic powers within the Indo-Pacific framework, ensuring balance in a multipolar world.

### 5. Legal and Institutional Provisions (Constitutional & Trade Law Linkages)

- **Article 73 & 246 (Indian Constitution):** Empower the Union Government to enter into international treaties and trade agreements.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Provides legal framework for regulating



imports, exports, and trade agreements.

- **WTO Framework Compliance:** The CETA aligns with World Trade Organization norms on free trade, investment protection, and dispute resolution.
- **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT):** Expected to accompany the trade pact, providing legal assurance to investors and minimizing trade disputes.

## 6. Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

- The India–U.K. CETA is more than a trade agreement—it symbolizes a deepening of strategic, economic, and cultural ties between two leading democracies.
- It serves as a *launchpad for inclusive growth*, innovation, and sustainable global partnership.
- **UPSC Relevance:**
  - **GS Paper II (International Relations):** Bilateral relations, India’s foreign policy, and strategic partnerships.
  - **GS Paper III (Economy):** Trade policies, globalization impacts, and economic reforms.
  - **Essay Paper:** Topics on global economic interdependence, India’s role in post-Brexit global trade.
  - **Prelims:** Key facts about Vision 2035, CETA objectives, and India–U.K. diplomatic developments.

### In Essence:

The India–U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement stands as a model of *modern diplomacy fostering mutual prosperity, innovation, and resilience in a globalized economy*.

## 2. India Welcomes the First Phase of President Trump’s Peace Plan

### 1. Context and Background

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has welcomed the agreement on the *first phase* of U.S. President Donald Trump’s *Middle East Peace Plan*, reflecting India’s support for diplomatic efforts toward regional stability.
- The statement was made through an official post on X (formerly Twitter), following the announcement of the peace plan’s partial implementation involving Israel and Palestine.
- The Prime Minister acknowledged the *leadership of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu* and expressed optimism that the development could lead to humanitarian relief and long-term peace in Gaza and the broader region.



### 2. Key Elements of President Trump’s Peace Plan

- **Definition – Peace Plan:** A diplomatic framework proposed by the U.S. to resolve long-standing geopolitical conflicts, in this case, between Israel and Palestine.
- **First Phase:** Focuses on immediate humanitarian assistance, release of hostages, and steps toward de-escalation in the Gaza Strip.
- The plan envisions eventual normalization between Israel and several Arab states, with economic cooperation as a peace-building tool.
- It underscores U.S. mediation efforts in the Middle East and emphasizes a phased approach toward a “*two-state solution*” in the long run.

### 3. India’s Position and Diplomatic Significance

- India has consistently advocated for a peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict through dialogue and mutual recognition.
- The Prime Minister’s statement aligns with India’s **balanced foreign policy**—supporting peace efforts



without compromising traditional ties with Palestine.

- India recognizes Israel's right to security and simultaneously supports the establishment of a sovereign, independent Palestine living in peace with Israel.
- The gesture underscores India's role as a responsible global actor promoting peace and stability in conflict regions.

#### 4. Humanitarian Dimension and Regional Implications

- The focus on **release of hostages** and **enhanced humanitarian assistance** in Gaza highlights the importance of addressing human suffering amid political negotiations.
- India has historically contributed to humanitarian and developmental aid in West Asia through the UN and bilateral channels.
- The success of this phase could reduce hostilities, stabilize the region, and open avenues for broader diplomatic normalization in the Middle East.

#### 5. Legal and Constitutional Provisions Related to India's Foreign Policy

- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution (Directive Principles of State Policy):** Directs the State to promote international peace and security, maintain just and honorable relations among nations, and encourage respect for international law.
- **Article 73 (Executive Power of the Union):** Empowers the Union Government to conduct international relations and enter into treaties.
- India's foreign policy stance is guided by the principles of **Panchsheel**, **Non-Alignment (NAM)**, and **Strategic Autonomy**—promoting dialogue-based conflict resolution.
- India's participation aligns with its commitment to the **United Nations Charter**, emphasizing peaceful settlement of disputes (Article 2, UN Charter).

#### 6. Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

- The Prime Minister's endorsement of the peace plan's first phase reiterates India's diplomatic maturity, commitment to humanitarian principles, and support for multilateral peace efforts.
- By balancing relations with both Israel and Palestine, India showcases its nuanced foreign policy aimed at regional stability and global harmony.

##### • UPSC Relevance:

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** India's role in promoting peace and stability, India–Israel and India–Palestine relations, and global conflict resolution efforts.
- **GS Paper II (Polity):** Constitutional provisions on international relations (Articles 51 & 73).
- **Essay Paper:** Topics on peace diplomacy, humanitarian foreign policy, and India's global leadership role.
- **Prelims:** Key facts about the U.S. Peace Plan, India's diplomatic principles, and related international organizations.

##### In Essence:

India's support for the first phase of President Trump's Peace Plan highlights its consistent advocacy for peaceful dialogue, humanitarian relief, and stable international order—reflecting the ideals of the Indian Constitution and its evolving global diplomacy.

### 3. Eighth International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly

- **Global Platform for Solar Energy Scale-Up:** The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, an intergovernmental organization with 124 Member and Signatory Countries, is hosting its Eighth



Assembly from October 27-30, 2025, in New Delhi, India. ISA is a major treaty-based organization primarily from the **Global South**, launched by India and France at **COP21, Paris** (2015). This Assembly, held before **COP30 in Brazil**, aims to shape priorities for scaling solar energy, unlocking transformative finance, and building skill ecosystems for a just energy transition.

- **India's Solar Leadership and Key Domestic Initiatives:** India is the **world's third-largest solar producer** and third-largest overall in renewable energy installations (125 GW solar capacity). India achieved its renewable energy targets five years ahead of schedule, with over 50% of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil resources. Key Indian schemes for solar deployment include:
  - **PM Surya Ghar - Muft Bijli Yojana (PM SGBMY):** Aims to solarise **10 million households** (20 lakh households already benefiting).
  - **PM-Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM):** Targets installing 10 GW of small solar plants, supporting 1.4 million off-grid solar pumps, and solarising 3.5 million grid-connected agricultural pumps.
  - **India is also the second-largest manufacturer of solar modules** and is pursuing a goal of manufacturing 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2031.
- **ISA's Strategic Pillars and Initiatives:** The Eighth Assembly will focus on four strategic pillars: **Catalytic Finance Hub; Global Capability Centre & Digitisation; Regional & Country-Level Engagement; and Technology Roadmap & Policy.** Key initiatives to be advanced include:
  - **Africa Solar Facility** (for catalytic finance).
  - **Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Platform** (to accelerate solar deployment in SIDS).
  - Advancing the **One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG)** initiative and scaling innovation like floating solar and green hydrogen.
  - The Assembly will also release flagship reports: **Ease of Doing Solar 2025** and **Solar Trends 2025.**
- **ISA's Core Mission and Impact:** ISA's mission is to unlock **over \$1 trillion of investment** in solar by 2030, while reducing the cost of technology and financing. It aims to transform lives, bring reliable and affordable clean energy, and fuel sustainable growth, especially in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and SIDS. ISA acts as a platform for aggregation, harmonizing technology standards, enabling data-driven energy planning, and mobilizing investments by reducing risks.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions and Key Definitions:**
  - **Renewable Energy/Environment:** Falls under the constitutional provisions related to environmental protection and promotion of scientific temper. **Article 48A (DPSP)** mandates the State to protect and improve the environment. **Article 51A (g) (Fundamental Duty)** mandates every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment.
  - **International Solar Alliance (ISA):** An **international intergovernmental organization** headquartered in Gurugram, India (the first in India), with a treaty-based framework.





- **Global South:** A term often used to refer to countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, which are generally categorized as developing or newly industrialized and often face unique development challenges, including energy access.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

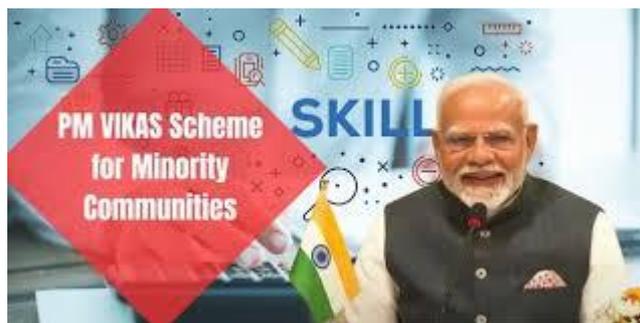
The Eighth ISA Assembly is a critical global forum showcasing India's leadership in the clean energy transition through its domestic successes (PM-KUSUM, PM-SGMBY) and international commitment (ISA). Its focus on catalytic finance, technology roadmaps (like OSOWOG, Green Hydrogen), and capacity building underscores the shift from mere *ambition* to *tangible action* in solar deployment.

**UPSC Relevance:** This topic is highly relevant for the UPSC Civil Services Exam across several areas:

- **GS-II (International Relations):** ISA as a major instance of India's foreign policy, South-South cooperation, and global leadership on climate action (post-COP21 Paris Agreement).
- **GS-III (Economy & Environment):** Renewable energy targets, energy security, key government schemes (PM-KUSUM, PM-SGMBY), Green Hydrogen Mission, India's role in solar manufacturing, and international organizations dealing with environmental governance.
- **Prelims:** Questions can be framed on ISA's launch year, headquarters, founding countries, mission (trillion-dollar investment target), key initiatives (OSOWOG, SIDS Platform, Africa Solar Facility), and major domestic solar schemes.

## 4. Skilling for Minority Empowerment: PM VIKAS Scheme & IIT Palakkad Collaboration

- **Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS) Scheme:** PM VIKAS (Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan) is a **Central Sector Scheme** under the **Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA)**. It's an **integrated scheme** that converges five erstwhile schemes: *Seekho aur Kamao*, *USTTAD*, *Hamari Dharohar*, *Nai Roshni*, and *Nai Manzil*. The core objective is the socio-economic **empowerment** of minority and artisan communities through skill development, entrepreneurship promotion, and leadership training.
- **Focus on Future-Ready Technical Skills:** The MoU signed between MoMA and **IIT Palakkad**, an **Institute of National Importance**, is for a skilling project specifically targeting minority communities in Kerala. The training will focus on **emerging domains** like **Junior Chip Designers** (150 trainees), **Embedded Software Engineers** (150 trainees), and **Junior Engineers (Drone R&D)** (100 trainees), totaling **400 candidates**. This shift to high-tech, **non-traditional skilling** is crucial for enhancing employability and **Innovation**.
- **Comprehensive Support and Implementation:** The entire training cost, including a **stipend** for trainees, will be borne by the Ministry of Minority Affairs. IIT Palakkad will be the implementing institution, leveraging its technical expertise. The scheme guarantees **placement support** for both employment and self-employment opportunities, ensuring a complete value chain from training to livelihood creation. The scheme aims for a placement rate of **75%** for candidates trained under NSQF-aligned job roles.
- **Key Components of PM VIKAS (Holistic Approach):** The scheme is structured around four main components:





1. **Skilling and Training** (Traditional Arts/Crafts & Non-traditional Skilling).
  2. **Leadership and Entrepreneurship** (Focus on women empowerment, including creation of 'Biz Sakhis'/Business Mentors).
  3. **Education** (Bridge programs for school dropouts up to 8th, 10th, and 12th standards via NIOS).
  4. **Infrastructure Development** (Creation of **Vishwakarma Villages** using a 'Hub and Spoke' model to link arts with tourism and commerce).
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions:** The scheme aligns with the state's responsibility towards weaker sections, drawing from **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)** like **Article 46** (promoting educational and economic interests of weaker sections). More specifically, the rights of minorities are protected by **Fundamental Rights** like **Article 29** (right to conserve distinct language, script, or culture) and **Article 30** (right to establish and administer educational institutions). The scheme benefits the **six centrally notified minority communities** (Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians/Parsis).

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The PM VIKAS-IIT Palakkad collaboration signifies the government's commitment to the **socio-economic upliftment of minorities** through targeted, high-value skill development, moving beyond traditional skilling to meet **Industry 4.0** demands. It embodies the principle of '**Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas**' by integrating marginalized groups into the mainstream economy.

**UPSC Relevance:** The PM VIKAS scheme is highly important for:

- **GS-I (Society):** Issues related to poverty and developmental schemes for vulnerable sections.
- **GS-II (Polity & Governance):** Government policies and interventions for the development of minority communities, including constitutional safeguards.
- **GS-III (Economy & Science):** Skill development missions (convergence with **Skill India Mission**), entrepreneurship promotion, and leveraging technology (Chip Design, Drones) for inclusive growth.

## 5. Afghanistan-India Diplomatic Dilemma: Taliban Flag and Recognition

- **Core Diplomatic Challenge (Flag Dilemma):** India faces a **diplomatic dilemma** regarding the display of the **Taliban flag** next to the Indian flag during the visit of the Afghan Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, as India has **not yet granted official recognition** to the Taliban-ruled "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan." This challenge highlights the nuanced engagement strategy—maintaining channels of communication without formal state recognition.
  - **Definition: Diplomatic Recognition** is a unilateral political act by one state that acknowledges an act or status of another state or government, thereby signaling its readiness to engage in formal relations (e.g., exchanging diplomats). *De jure* recognition is full and legal, while *de facto* recognition is practical, acknowledging a government's control without legal formality.





- **India's Non-Recognition Stance & Policy Template:** India's current policy is one of **non-recognition** of the Taliban regime. The Afghan Embassy in New Delhi continues to fly the flag of the **oustled Islamic Republic of Afghanistan** (Ashraf Ghani's government). India's overall approach is a delicate **balancing act** between strategic interests (security, regional stability) and ethical concerns (human rights, inclusive government).
- **Significance of the High-Level Visit:** Muttaqi's visit is the **first ministerial-level contact** in India since the Taliban takeover in August 2021. The visit was facilitated by a special exemption granted by the **UN Security Council's 1988 Sanctions Committee**, as Muttaqi is a sanctioned individual, underscoring the international complexity of engaging with the regime.
- **Key Drivers of India's Engagement (Strategic Interests):** Despite non-recognition, India is compelled to engage due to critical **security, humanitarian, and connectivity interests**. Key concerns are ensuring Afghan soil is **not used for anti-India terrorism** (by groups like LeT/JeM), continuing **humanitarian assistance** to the Afghan people, protecting significant **past investments** (over \$3 billion in development projects), and securing **regional connectivity** (via Chabahar Port) to Central Asia, especially amidst growing Chinese influence.
- **Constitutional & Legal Context (India):** The **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**, and the **Flag Code of India, 2002**, govern the display of the Indian flag. Diplomatic protocol, which usually mandates the display of the visiting country's flag alongside the host's, becomes subject to an internal political/diplomatic decision when the visiting *de facto* government is not *de jure* recognized.
- **Regional Geopolitics & Convergence:** The visit occurs against the backdrop of evolving regional dynamics, including the **Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan** (which India attends). India recently joined Russia, China, and Pakistan in a joint statement opposing the deployment of foreign military infrastructure in Afghanistan (a subtle pushback against potential US return to bases like Bagram), suggesting a strategic, pragmatic convergence of certain security interests with the Taliban's regional stance.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The diplomatic dilemma over the Taliban flag symbolizes India's **pragmatic yet cautious** foreign policy towards Afghanistan. While not granting formal recognition, the engagement with the Taliban Foreign Minister indicates a move from purely technical contacts to **substantive political engagement** driven by **national security imperatives** and **humanitarian obligations**.

**UPSC Relevance:** This topic is highly relevant for **GS-II (International Relations)** and **GS-III (Security)**. It encapsulates India's complex foreign policy in its immediate neighborhood, specifically addressing:

1. The challenges of **non-recognition of a *de facto* regime** versus the need for **pragmatic engagement** to safeguard national interests.
2. The interplay between **diplomacy, security concerns** (cross-border terrorism), and **humanitarian aid**.
3. India's role in the evolving **regional geopolitical landscape** of Central and South Asia, including countering terrorism and managing major power competition (China, US, Russia) in Afghanistan.

## 6. Constitutional and Legal Provisions of Preventive Detention: A Critical Analysis

- **Definition & Constitutional Basis:**



- **Preventive Detention** is the detainment of a person without trial based on the suspicion that they are likely to commit a future criminal act or to prevent them from doing something prejudicial to the state/public. It is a power exercised on the basis of '**subjective satisfaction**' of the executive authority.
- **Constitutional Basis: Article 22 (Clauses 3–7)** constitutionalizes preventive detention, empowering both the Parliament and State Legislatures to enact such laws (Union List Entry 9 and Concurrent List Entry 3). It lays down minimal safeguards for the detenus.
- **Fundamental Rights Conflict: The Bermuda Triangle & Golden Triangle:**
  - **The Bermuda Triangle:** Article 22(3)–(7) is termed the "Bermuda Triangle," as rights like **liberty (Article 21), equality (Article 14), and due process** allegedly "vanish without a trace" when a person is detained under preventive detention.
  - **The Golden Triangle:** Historically, judicial interpretation has often isolated Article 22 from the "Golden Triangle" of Fundamental Rights: **Article 14 (Equality), Article 19 (Freedoms), and the enriched Article 21 (Right to Life and Liberty with due process)**, thus reducing judicial scrutiny.
- **Judicial Pronouncements and Distinction:**
  - **Key Rulings:** Cases like *Dhanya M. vs State of Kerala (2025)*, *S.K. Nazneen vs State of Telangana (2023)*, and *Banka Sneha Sheela vs State of Telangana (2021)* emphasize that the power is **extraordinary** and must be exercised **sparingly**.
  - **Crucial Distinction:** The Supreme Court has repeatedly stressed the vital distinction between:
    - **'Law and Order'** (Mere violation of law/disturbance of tranquility, manageable by ordinary police/criminal procedure).
    - **'Public Order'** (Threat to the community, affecting public life, justifying detention). Preventive detention cannot be used for 'law and order' issues or as a substitute for criminal prosecution or to circumvent bail orders.
- **Constitutional Precedents and Judicial Retreat:**
  - **Historical Lineage:** The practice is a colonial relic (e.g., Bengal Regulations of 1818).
  - *A.K. Gopalan vs State of Madras (1950)*: The SC initially upheld the detention, ruling that preventive detention could only be tested on the basis of Article 22, isolating it from Articles 19 and 21.
  - **\*\*Post-*Maneka Gandhi (1978)* Scenario:** Although *Maneka Gandhi* established that "procedure established by law" must be **fair, just, and reasonable (Due Process)**, subsequent rulings like *A.K. Roy vs Union of India (1982)* often reverted to pre-*Maneka* reasoning, refusing to subject detention laws to the enriched interpretation of Article 21 or the doctrine of proportionality.
- **Procedural Safeguards (Article 22):** The constitutional safeguards are minimal:





- The detention cannot exceed **three months** unless an **Advisory Board** confirms sufficient cause.
- The detaining authority must communicate the **grounds of detention** to the detenu.
- The detenu must be afforded the **earliest opportunity to make a representation** against the order.
- However, Parliament is empowered to bypass the Advisory Board review by merely invoking 'special circumstances' or 'classes of persons' (Article 22(7)).
- **The 'Pre-Crime' Framework and Executive Overreach:** Preventive detention is akin to a '**pre-crime' framework**, arresting individuals based on predicted (but uncommitted) actions, thus undermining principles like the **presumption of innocence** and *audi alteram partem* (right to be heard). The broad definitions in state laws (like KAAPA's 'goonda' or 'rowdy') lead to **executive overreach**, making the power a routine administrative tool rather than an exceptional measure.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The legal regime of preventive detention in India represents a fundamental tension between **State security/order** and **individual liberty**. While its necessity in confronting grave threats (terrorism, transnational cartels) is acknowledged, its colonial origin and judicial history of insulating it from the 'Golden Triangle' of fundamental rights (Articles 14, 19, 21) highlight a "**constitutional abyss.**" Recent Supreme Court judgments offer a "**faint glimmer of light**" by demanding strict adherence to constitutional safeguards and distinction between 'law and order' and 'public order,' signaling an urgent need for the **reform of the regime** to prevent its misuse as a routine tool for executive convenience.

**UPSC Relevance:** This topic is crucial for **GS-II (Polity and Constitution: Fundamental Rights, Judiciary)**. It requires a nuanced understanding of:

1. **Fundamental Rights vs. State Security** (A core constitutional conflict).
2. The changing **Judicial Interpretation** of Articles 14, 19, 21, and 22 (especially the impact of *Maneka Gandhi*).
3. The distinction between '**Law and Order**' and '**Public Order**' (often tested in Mains and Prelims).
4. The role of the **Advisory Board** and the legislative power of the Parliament concerning fundamental rights.

## 7. Strengthening India-U.K. Strategic and Economic Partnership

- **The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and Economic Integration:**
  - **Key Instrument:** The signing of the CETA (July 2025) is the core foundation for the deepened partnership, aiming to **double bilateral commerce by 2030**.
  - **Market Access:** It secures lower tariffs for Indian exports (textiles, pharmaceuticals, agriculture) and reduced duties for U.K. exports (Scotch whisky, automobiles).
  - **Context:** This is part of India's expanding web of economic pacts, including the recent Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with EFTA (October 2025), which ties market access to investment commitments.



- **Investment, Mobility, and Services Cooperation:**

- **Investment Flow:** The U.K. is India's sixth-largest investor. Ongoing negotiations for a **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)**, alongside CETA, are expected to significantly boost U.K.'s Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India, particularly in manufacturing and services.



- **Talent Mobility:** The **Double Contributions Convention (DCC)** is crucial, exempting employers of Indian professionals in the U.K. from double social security contributions for up to three years, easing mobility and reducing costs in the services sector.
- **Synergistic Sectors:** Indian industry can leverage synergies in renewables, electric mobility, digital finance, aerospace, and higher education.

- **Strategic Alignment and Technology Security:**

- **Vision 2035 Roadmap:** The partnership is guided by the Vision 2035 roadmap, focusing on cooperation beyond commerce, encompassing defence, technology, climate action, and education.
- **Defence and Co-production:** The **Defence Industrial Roadmap (unveiled July)** prioritizes joint development and co-production of advanced defence platforms.
- **Critical Technologies:** The **Technology Security Initiative (TSI, launched 2024)** brings National Security Advisers together for collaboration in sensitive technologies: **AI, Quantum Computing, Semiconductors, Critical Minerals, and Advanced Materials.**

- **Geopolitical Significance and Global Order:**

- **Global Restructuring:** The partnership is positioned against a backdrop of global value chain restructuring and economic fragmentation into regional blocs, focusing on resilience and security.
- **Mutual Benefits:** For the U.K., India offers access to a vast market, digital innovation, green finance, and a geopolitical partner in the **Indo-Pacific**. For India, the U.K. offers advanced technology, defence platforms, and capital.
- **Co-Architects:** The leaders aim to signal a deeper partnership, positioning themselves as **co-architects of a more resilient, open, and technology-driven global order.**

- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions (Related Provisions):**

- **Article 253 (International Treaties):** Enables Parliament to make laws for implementing any treaty, agreement, or convention with any other country or decision made at any international conference, association, or other body. This empowers the legislative backing for agreements like CETA and the BIT.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Governs foreign trade and policy, providing the legal framework for implementing tariff changes and regulatory cooperation mandated by FTAs.



- **FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act), 1999:** Regulates FDI and cross-border transactions, providing the administrative framework for the expected investment boost from the U.K.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The elevated India-U.K. partnership, anchored by the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and driven by the Vision 2035 roadmap, signifies a transition from a traditional relationship to a modern, strategic collaboration. By merging trade liberalization with critical technology sharing, defence co-development, and talent mobility frameworks, both nations are addressing the challenges of a fragmenting global economy and aiming to enhance resilience and security. The success of this partnership will depend on aligning regulatory frameworks and moving from procurement to genuine co-production.

**UPSC Relevance:** This topic is vital for **GS-II (International Relations: Bilateral, Regional, and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India)** and **GS-III (Economy: Liberalization, Investment Models, Trade Agreements)**. It covers:

1. **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)/CETA/BIT** as tools of economic policy.
2. India's **Geopolitical Strategy** in the Indo-Pacific and its choice of strategic partners.
3. **Defence, Technology, and Critical Minerals** collaboration (key for national security and economic self-reliance).
4. The dynamics of **skilled labour mobility** (Social Security Conventions like DCC).

## 8. Proposed Environmental Clearance Exemption for Waste Management Units

- **Key Proposal & Scope of Exemption:** The Union Environment Ministry has proposed to exempt **Common Municipal Solid Waste Management Facilities (MSWM)** and **Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs)** from the mandatory requirement of **prior Environmental Clearance (EC)** under the **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006**.
  - **Definition: Prior Environmental Clearance (EC)** is a mandatory procedural safeguard under the EIA Notification, 2006, where specific developmental activities must first assess their potential environmental impacts (EIA) and receive approval from the central or state authority before commencing work.
- **Rationale for Exemption:** The proposal is based on the recommendation of the sectoral **Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC)** on infrastructure projects. The EAC's rationale is that MSWM facilities and CETPs are already governed by **stringent and comprehensive regulatory regimes** under existing environmental statutes.
- **Existing Legal Frameworks (The Basis for Regulation):** The two primary Central Acts invoked to justify the exemption are:
  - **The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974:** Regulates water pollution and controls the discharge of effluents, which applies directly to CETPs.
  - **The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981:** Regulates air pollution, which is relevant for various processes in MSWM facilities (e.g., incineration, landfill gases).





- **Mechanism of Exemption (EIA Notification, 2006):** The exemption is to be executed by officially **omitting the relevant entries** related to MSWM facilities and CETPs from the list of activities requiring prior EC under the schedule of the EIA Notification, 2006. This signifies a shift towards relying on **sector-specific pollution control laws** instead of the broader, upfront EC process.
- **Broader Implications for Governance:** The proposal reflects a trend towards **easing regulatory burden** and potentially **fast-tracking infrastructure projects** related to waste management. However, this shift raises concerns about the potential dilution of the **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** process, which is primarily a tool for *proactive planning* and *public consultation* before a project is approved.
- **Legal Provisions for Waste Management:** Beyond the Air and Water Acts, MSWM facilities are specifically governed by the **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016** (under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986), which mandate various procedural and technical requirements, including site selection, closure, and environmental standards.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The proposed exemption of Common MSWM facilities and CETPs from the prior Environmental Clearance requirement, while justified by the existence of specific Acts like the Water Act, 1974, and Air Act, 1981, marks a significant shift in environmental governance. It represents a policy focus on expediting vital urban and industrial infrastructure by moving away from the overarching EIA framework. While streamlining clearances is desirable, it necessitates enhanced and effective enforcement of the existing sectoral pollution control rules to ensure environmental standards are not compromised.

**UPSC Relevance:** This topic is highly relevant for **GS-III (Environment & Ecology, Conservation, Environmental Pollution & Degradation, EIA)** and **GS-II (Governance and Policy)**. It covers:

1. The structure and role of **Key Environmental Legislations** in India (**EIA Notification, 2006; Water Act, 1974; Air Act, 1981**).
2. The concept and implementation of **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**.
3. Challenges and policy decisions regarding **Solid Waste Management (SWM)** and **Effluent Treatment** in India.
4. The ongoing debate between **Ease of Doing Business/Project Clearance** and **Environmental Protection**.

## 9. Data Anomaly and Underreporting of Crimes Against Women in Manipur Conflict (2023)

- **Contrasting Crime Trends Amidst Conflict:** The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for Manipur in 2023 presents a major **anomaly**. While almost all major crime categories saw a sharp **surge** during the ethnic conflict between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities, crimes against women showed a counter-intuitive **decline**.
  - **Surge Data (2022 to 2023):** Arson cases soared from **27 to 6,203**; Rioting cases rose from **84 to 5,421**; and Murder cases nearly tripled from **47 to 151**.





- **Anomaly Data (2022 to 2023):** Cognisable crimes against women showed a **30% decline**. Rape cases fell from **42 to 27**; and cases of assault with intent to outrage modesty declined from **67 to 66**.
- **Massive Underreporting and Data Masking:** The juxtaposed data strongly suggests a **massive underreporting** of offenses involving women during the conflict. This is despite the **Supreme Court's cognisance** in July 2023 of a "systemic" and "unprecedented magnitude" of sexual violence and numerous documented reports of rape, torture, and murder of women surfacing from May 2023 onwards.
  - **Definition: Underreporting** refers to the discrepancy between the actual number of crimes committed and the number officially reported to law enforcement agencies (First Information Reports/FIRs).
- **Societal and Conflict-Induced Barriers to Reporting:** The underreporting is driven by two main factors:
  - **Social Stigma:** This is a long-standing, well-documented trend across India, where fear and stigma prevent women from reporting gendered violence.
  - **Conflict Environment:** The intensity of the ethnic conflict, the breakdown of law and order, displacement of nearly **70,000 people**, and potential obstruction in accessing justice mechanisms (police stations, courts) compounded the inability to file or register complaints, thus masking the true scale of the violence.
- **Legal and Judicial Context (Supreme Court and Gender Justice):** The Supreme Court of India taking *suo motu* (on its own motion) or through petitions, noted the gravity of the sexual violence. This highlights the judiciary's role in addressing state failures and ensuring accountability, especially concerning gender-based violence during conflict.
  - **Key Acts:** Crimes against women fall under the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** and specific laws like the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012**. The failure to register FIRs in such crimes constitutes a direct violation of constitutional and statutory mandates.
- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions for Gendered Violence:**
  - **Article 14 (Equality before Law) and Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty):** The failure of the state machinery to effectively register and investigate crimes against women violates their fundamental rights to a life of dignity, safety, and equal protection under the law.
  - **Section 166A, IPC:** Deals with punishment for a public servant disobeying the law, which includes failure to record information relating to cognisable offenses against women (like rape/sexual harassment) under **Section 154, CrPC (Filing of FIR)**.

## Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The NCRB data for Manipur in 2023, by showing a dramatic surge in overall crime but a simultaneous decline in reported crimes against women, starkly illustrates the phenomenon of **conflict-related sexual violence and the systemic failure of the reporting mechanism** in times of ethnic strife. This situation raises serious questions about the State's duty to protect vulnerable groups, ensure the rule of law, and provide access to justice during crises. Effective policing reform, judicial oversight, and addressing the



deep-seated stigma surrounding gendered violence are essential to ensure data accurately reflects ground realities.

**UPSC Relevance:** This topic is crucial for **GS-I (Indian Society: Role of Women, Social Empowerment)**, **GS-II (Governance, Constitution: Fundamental Rights, Judiciary, Law and Order)**, and **GS-III (Internal Security: Insurgency, Border Areas)**. It requires analysis of:

1. The intersection of **ethnic conflict, internal security, and gender-based violence**.
2. The reliability and limitations of **NCRB data** as an indicator of ground reality.
3. The **Constitutional duty of the State** to protect citizens, particularly women, in disturbed areas.
4. The role of the **Judiciary** and **NHRC/NCW** in addressing human rights violations during conflict.

## 10. Erosion of Workplace Safety and Labour Rights in India

- **High Incidence and Underreporting of Accidents:** India has a disproportionately high rate of fatal workplace accidents; the **British Safety Council estimates one in four worldwide occur in India**. This is a **conservative figure** due to widespread **underreporting**, particularly among **contract and informal workers** who are unregistered and unprotected by law.
  - **Root Cause:** The International Labour Organization (ILO) notes accidents are rarely random but occur because managements **cut corners** and **underinvest in safety** to maximize profit, often neglecting maintenance, dismissing worker complaints, and imposing long hours.
- **Failure of Enforcement and Employer Impunity:** Recent major accidents (Telangana chemical reactor burst, Sivakasi fire, Ennore plant collapse) highlight a clear pattern of **employer negligence**, including outdated machinery, ignored maintenance, lack of safety alarms/officers, and absence of required on-site safety infrastructure (e.g., ambulances).
  - **Accountability Gap:** Current compensation mechanisms, like the **Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923**, and **ESI Act, 1948**, are often meagre. Critically, these laws **do not hold employers criminally accountable** for preventable deaths, turning compensation into mere *ex gratia* payment (charity) from public funds, thus absolving management responsibility.
- **Dilution of Statutory Protections:** Since the 1990s, labour protections have been systematically dismantled, often under the guise of increasing "flexibility" and promoting "Ease of Doing Business."
  - **Key Measures:** This includes **weakening inspections**, diluting laws, and introducing systems like "**self-certification**" (e.g., in Maharashtra, 2015), which brands safety regulations as "obstacles to business" and shifts oversight responsibility away from the government.
- **The Shift in Labour Law Regime (OSHC Code, 2020):** The proposed **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC) Code, 2020**, set to replace the foundational **Factories Act, 1948** (the cornerstone of labour regulation), epitomizes the shift.





- **Impact:** Once enforced, it will move health and safety from being a **statutory right** to an **executive discretion** or "government generosity." Additionally, states have increased permanent **working hour limits** (e.g., Karnataka, 2023), which is known to significantly compromise safety.
- **Constitutional and Legal Provisions:**
  - **Article 21 (Right to Life):** The right to a safe working environment is viewed by the Supreme Court as an integral part of the right to life and dignity under this Article.
  - **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP): Article 39(e)** directs the state to secure that the health and strength of workers are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength. **Article 42** mandates that the state shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.
  - **Key Labour Laws:** The **Factories Act, 1948** (soon to be replaced), the **Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923**, and the **Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948** are the primary statutes governing safety, working conditions, and compensation.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

India's severe industrial accident rate reflects a broken labour-safety architecture, rooted in employer indifference and exacerbated by legislative and administrative weakening of protective laws. The move away from the stringent framework of the Factories Act towards a regime prioritizing 'Ease of Doing Business' without restoring robust inspection and criminal accountability for gross negligence places workers' lives constantly at risk. Reform must prioritize restoring workplace safety as a **statutory right**, reinstating effective **inspection as enforcement**, and ensuring **criminal liability** for preventable deaths.

**UPSC Relevance:** This topic is vital for **GS-II (Social Justice: Welfare Schemes, Governance)** and **GS-III (Indian Economy: Mobilization of Resources, Industrial Policy, Growth and Development)**. It addresses:

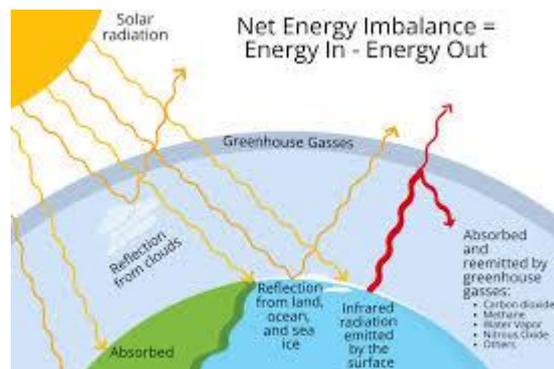
1. **Labour Reforms** (The Four Labour Codes and their impact on workers' rights).
2. The implementation of **DPSP (Article 39(e), 42)** and the associated welfare legislation.
3. The critical issue of the **informal sector** and the challenges of **enforcement and compliance** in labour laws.
4. The ethical and economic debate between "**Ease of Doing Business**" and **social/worker security**.

## 11. Fundamentals of Climate Models and Their Accuracy

- **What are Climate Models?** Climate models are **sophisticated computer programs** based on **mathematical equations** representing the physics, chemistry, and biology that govern the **Earth's climate system** (atmosphere, oceans, land surface, and ice). They help scientists understand past climate change, current trends, and project future scenarios.
  - **Key Components:** Models incorporate vast amounts of data, including greenhouse gas concentrations, solar radiation, aerosols, and land-use changes.
  - **Definition: Climate System** refers to the complex interactive system consisting of the atmosphere, hydrosphere (water bodies), cryosphere (ice), land surface, and biosphere (living things).



- **Working Mechanism and Scenario Projections:** Climate models are essentially **numerical simulations**. They divide the Earth and its atmosphere into a **3-dimensional grid**, calculate the interactions between different grid cells (e.g., heat transfer, moisture movement) over short time steps, and iterate this process forward to project climate variables (temperature, precipitation, sea level).



- **Projections vs. Predictions:** Models produce **projections**, which are estimates of future climate based on specific scenarios (e.g., high-emission vs. low-emission pathways) known as **Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs)** or **Shared Socio-economic Pathways (SSPs)**, rather than deterministic short-term weather *predictions*.
- **Accuracy and Limitations of Climate Models:** Climate models have proven **remarkably accurate** in predicting global mean temperature increases and other large-scale changes over decades, with many early model projections matching observed reality closely.
  - **Limitations:** They are complex and rely on assumptions about future human behavior (emission levels). Their **accuracy decreases** when predicting **regional or local impacts** and specific extreme weather events, which is often where skeptics focus their criticism. Uncertainty also arises from representing complex, small-scale processes (like cloud formation).
- **Scientific Consensus and Model Robustness:** The robust nature of climate science is supported by the fact that **multiple independent models**, developed by different international groups, all show consistent results regarding the direction and magnitude of human-caused warming. This consistency across diverse models reinforces the **scientific consensus** on climate change.
- **International Framework and Conventions:** The need for and reliability of climate models underpin international climate action.
  - **UNFCCC, 1992 (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change):** Acknowledges that changes in the concentration of greenhouse gases due to human activity could lead to global warming.
  - **Paris Agreement (2015):** Relies on model projections to set long-term temperature goals (keeping warming well below 2°C) and to guide Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
  - **IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change):** Provides the most authoritative assessments, which are entirely based on the synthesis and validation of thousands of climate model simulations and observations.

## Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

Climate models are indispensable tools that translate fundamental scientific laws into quantitative projections of Earth's future climate. Despite political rhetoric to the contrary, the models have demonstrated high skill in predicting long-term, large-scale warming trends driven by anthropogenic emissions. Any critique must distinguish between the accurate, long-term **climate projections** based on well-established physics and less certain short-term **weather predictions**. The global response to climate change, including the Paris Agreement, is strategically dependent on the scientific foundation provided by these models.



**UPSC Relevance:** This topic is central to **GS-III (Environment & Ecology, Conservation, Climate Change)**. Key areas of focus include:

1. The **scientific basis of climate change** and the role of the **IPCC**.
  2. Understanding the difference between **climate and weather**.
  3. The significance of **UNFCCC and Paris Agreement** in international relations.
  4. Critically evaluating claims of climate skepticism versus **scientific data and modeling consensus**.
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