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**VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY**  
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**STUDY CENTRE**

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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**9972258970 & 9740702455**

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



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## 1. VISTAAR: Digital Platform for Farmers

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Platform Launch:** The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is set to launch a new digital platform called **Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources (VISTAAR)**. This system aims to connect farmers with vital **agricultural information and services in real-time**.
- **Core Objective:** VISTAAR's primary goal is to **improve access** for farmers to essential resources, information, and services, potentially covering areas like market prices, weather advisories, scheme information, and technological inputs.
- **Significance:** The move aligns with the broader government focus on **Digital India** and **doubling farmers' income**, leveraging technology to address information asymmetry and improve efficiency in the agriculture sector.
- **Definition - Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** VISTAAR is an example of developing DPI in the agriculture sector (Agri-DPI), which involves creating **open-source, interoperable digital systems** designed to facilitate data exchange and delivery of services across the ecosystem.
- **Constitutional Provision:** The platform relates to the state's obligation under **Article 48** (Directive Principles of State Policy), which directs the State to **organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines**.



### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **Related Initiatives:** This effort complements existing digital initiatives like the **National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)**, which provides an online trading platform, and various state-level farmer databases.
- **Legal Framework:** Data governance and privacy aspects related to farmer data collected and used by platforms like VISTAAR are critical and are expected to be addressed under the principles of the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023**.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

VISTAAR represents a significant step towards the **digital transformation of Indian agriculture**. For the UPSC exam, this topic is highly relevant for **GS Paper-III** (Technology Missions, E-technology in the aid of farmers) and **GS Paper-II** (Government policies and interventions). It exemplifies the use of technology to achieve socio-economic goals, specifically improving farmers' welfare and making agriculture more sustainable and profitable.

## 2. ₹1 Trillion R&D Fund: Boosting Private Sector Innovation

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Scheme Identification:** The fund being referenced is the **Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme**, with a corpus of **₹1 lakh crore (₹1 trillion)**.
- **Core Objective:** The scheme aims to **spur private sector investment** in Research & Development (R&D) to bridge the current gap where private contribution to R&D in India is significantly lower than in developed economies.



- **Access & Inclusivity:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted that the fund is open to both **government institutions** and, critically, **private sector entities** across the country, encouraging widespread innovation.
- **Funding Mechanism:** The corpus will be provided as **long-term, low or nil-interest loans** and risk capital to support high-risk, high-impact projects, particularly in **deep-tech** and **strategic/sunrise sectors** (e.g., AI, Semiconductors, Clean Energy).
- **Institutional Anchor:** The fund is anchored under the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**, which provides strategic direction and manages the Special Purpose Fund (SPF) that acts as the custodian of the corpus.
- **Definition - Deep-Tech:** Refers to science-intensive innovations based on tangible engineering and scientific breakthroughs, requiring high upfront investment, long gestation periods, and often involving frontier technologies like Quantum Computing, Biotechnology, and Advanced Materials.



### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **Statutory Backing:** The ANRF, which administers the fund, was established through an **Act of Parliament: The Anusandhan National Research Foundation Act, 2023**, providing a strong legal and institutional foundation.
- **Policy Alignment:** The scheme is a crucial step towards achieving the vision of '**Viksit Bharat by 2047**' and fostering **Self-Reliance** in critical and emerging technologies.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The ₹1 trillion RDI Fund, channeled through ANRF, represents a **paradigm shift** in India's innovation policy from grant-based public funding to **private-sector-led, patient capital financing** for deep technology. This topic is vital for **UPSC GS Paper-III** (Science and Technology: Indigenisation of technology and developing new technology; Economy: Mobilization of resources), highlighting the government's strategy to enhance India's global competitiveness in the technological domain.

## 3. CEA's Optimistic FY26 GDP Growth Projection

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Upward Growth Projection:** Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran has expressed confidence that India's **Real GDP Growth** for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) will **exceed 6.8%**, signaling renewed optimism, up from the initial projection range of 6.3%-6.8%.
- **Driving Factors (Consumption & Investment):** The key drivers cited for the upward bias are expected **stronger private consumption** (boosted by GST rate cuts and income tax relief) and continued **robust private capital expenditure** and **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows**.
- **Definition - Real GDP:** The total monetary value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific period, **adjusted for inflation** (i.e., measured in constant prices) to accurately reflect the true increase in output.



- **Macroeconomic Context:** India remains the **fastest-growing major economy**, having recorded a strong 7.8% GDP growth in the first quarter of FY26, driven by services, manufacturing, and agriculture.
- **External Factors:** The CEA noted that a **successful resolution of the India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)** could further provide a significant **upward bias** to the growth forecast.
- **Policy Stance:** The growth is seen as a **supply-side expansion** fueled by **investment momentum**, emphasizing the government's focus on **capital expenditure (Capex)** and structural reforms (like the **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme**) to enhance domestic manufacturing and integration into global value chains.



#### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **Fiscal Policy Tool:** The use of **tax relief** (income tax cuts, GST rationalization) to boost consumption and aggregate demand is a key tool of **Expansionary Fiscal Policy**, which is a core mechanism for economic steering.
- **Institutional Forecast:** GDP projections like this are a critical input for the **Union Budget** and the **Economic Survey**, which is prepared by the Ministry of Finance under the guidance of the CEA, providing the official economic outlook.

#### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The CEA's projection reflects the **resilience of the Indian economy** to global headwinds and the success of **domestic policy measures** (fiscal policy, structural reforms) in stimulating both consumption and investment. This topic is highly relevant for **UPSC GS Paper-III** (Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment), specifically the dynamics of **GDP growth estimation, determinants of growth**, and the role of **fiscal stimulus** in managing the business cycle.

## 4. SC Ruling on Legal Privilege for In-House Counsel

#### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Judgment Context:** The Supreme Court (SC) delivered a ruling (October 31, 2025) clarifying the scope of **client-attorney privilege** in India, particularly for lawyers on a company's payroll, in the context of investigations by probe agencies.
- **Exclusion from Full Privilege:** The Court ruled that full-time salaried **In-House Counsel** are **not entitled to claim full client-attorney privilege** under **Section 132 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), 2023** (which replaced the Indian Evidence Act, 1872).
- **Rationale for Exclusion:** This exclusion is based on the finding that in-house counsel, as full-time salaried employees, **lack the professional independence** required to qualify as "Advocates" under the **Advocates Act, 1961**, due to their structural and financial ties with their employer.





- **Applicable Privilege:** While excluded from the full protection of Section 132 (which applies to practicing advocates), in-house counsels are entitled to **limited confidentiality protection** under **Section 134 of the BSA**.
- **Definition - Client-Attorney Privilege:** A legal rule that protects confidential communications between a client and their practicing legal professional made for the purpose of seeking or giving legal advice, allowing clients to speak freely without fear of disclosure.

#### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **Impact on Corporates:** The ruling necessitates a **major strategic shift** in how companies handle internal legal communications, prompting them to rethink sharing sensitive, confidential, or potentially incriminating information with their internal legal teams.
- **Protection for External Counsel:** The SC **reaffirmed** that **practicing advocates** (external lawyers) continue to enjoy **full privilege** under Section 132 of the BSA, protecting communications with their clients from disclosure to investigative agencies (except in cases of furthering an illegal purpose or observing a crime/fraud).
- **Constitutional Reflection:** The protection of client-attorney privilege under Section 132 is a reflection of the client's **constitutional protection against self-incrimination** under **Article 20(3)**.

#### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

This landmark SC judgment fundamentally **redefines the legal status** of in-house counsel concerning investigative scrutiny and significantly impacts corporate governance and compliance mechanisms in India. It is highly relevant for **UPSC GS Paper-II** (Governance, Policy, and the Judiciary) and **GS Paper-III** (Indian Economy and Corporate Governance), focusing on the **role of legal reforms (BSA 2023)**, the **independence of the legal profession**, and the resultant shift in **corporate legal strategy and risk management** in the face of increased regulatory enforcement.

### 5. RBI's Regulatory Trade-Off: Stability vs. Efficiency

#### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Core Trade-off Principle:** RBI Governor stated the central bank's focus is on promoting **efficiency and innovation** while **not undermining financial stability**, acknowledging the inherent **trade-off** ("no free lunch") between stability-enhancing regulation and its associated costs (e.g., restricted growth, reduced profitability).
- **Regulatory Balance:** The RBI aims to strike the **"right balance"** by being mindful to **minimize the cost** of regulatory changes and ensuring that short-term growth is not achieved at the expense of long-term financial stability, as instability can lead to distress and prolonged recovery.
- **Recent Measures:** The Governor highlighted the recent slew of over 20 regulatory proposals (announced with the Monetary Policy Statement) aimed at enhancing **banking competitiveness, credit flow, ease of doing business, consumer satisfaction, and rupee internationalization**.
- **Approach to Reform:** These measures are described as **"incremental"** and part of a **"continuum of regulatory evolution"**, rather than radical changes, with sufficient **"guardrails"** provided wherever restrictions are eased to ensure financial prudence.
- **Definition - Financial Stability:** A state where the financial system (banks, markets, infrastructure) is resilient to shocks, ensuring the smooth functioning of financial intermediation and payment systems, which is crucial for sustained economic growth.



### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **RBI's Mandate:** The RBI's primary mandate, as enshrined in the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**, includes **regulating the issue of bank notes and the keeping of reserves with a view to securing monetary stability** and generally to **operate the currency and credit system of the country to its advantage**. Financial stability is an implicit but critical component of this mandate.
- **Impact of Global Norms:** RBI's regulations are often influenced by global standards like the **Basel Accords**, which aim to strengthen the regulation, supervision, and risk management of the global banking sector.



### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The statement clarifies the RBI's sophisticated approach to **regulatory governance**, emphasizing that all policies must be evaluated through the lens of balancing **stability, growth, and innovation**. This topic is crucial for **UPSC GS Paper-III** (Indian Economy: Planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development; Government Budgeting; Investment models) as it addresses the core dilemmas faced by a central bank in managing a dynamic economy—specifically the role of the **RBI as a regulator** and the economic rationale behind its prudential norms.

## 6. Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Definition - Special Intensive Revision (SIR):** SIR is a **comprehensive, time-bound, house-to-house verification and update** of electoral rolls undertaken by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)**. Unlike the regular Summary Revision, SIR aims to create a **near-fresh or completely new, error-free voter list** through intensive field work.
- **Current Exercise:** The ECI launched a staggered, **pan-India SIR exercise** after a gap of **21 years** (last major one was in 2003). The second phase, which began on November 4, 2025, covers 9 States and 3 Union Territories and will bring over **51 crore electors** under intensive review.
- **Methodology:** The process is **intensive and standardized** but allows for local customization. It involves **Booth Level Officers (BLOs)** making at least **three visits** to each house to distribute and collect **partially pre-filled Enumeration Forms**. No documents are collected from electors during the initial enumeration phase to avoid harassment.
- **Objective and Concerns:** The primary objective is to **clean up the rolls** by removing deceased, duplicate, or shifted voters, and including all new eligible voters. However, the exercise has faced **political and legal resistance** in some states (like Kerala and Tamil Nadu) over fears of **mass disenfranchisement** or its linkage to citizenship issues (excluding Assam where citizenship issues are on a different legal track).





- **Transparency & Safeguards:** The process mandates public release of the **Draft Roll (Dec 9)** and the **Final Roll (Feb 7, 2026)**. The ECI has incorporated safeguards like the need for **hearings** before exclusion and the continuous use of existing **Forms 6, 7, and 8** to ensure no genuine elector is left out.

### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **Constitutional and Legal Basis:** The ECI derives its authority to order a SIR from **Article 324** of the Constitution (superintendence, direction, and control of elections) and specifically **Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People (RP) Act, 1950**, which empowers the ECI to direct a special revision of the electoral roll at any time.
- **Voter Eligibility:** The exercise strongly relies on **Article 326** (Adult Suffrage), ensuring every citizen who is not less than 18 years of age and is not otherwise disqualified is entitled to be registered as a voter.
- **Role of Political Parties:** The ECI mandates the involvement of **Booth Level Agents (BLAs)** of political parties at the grassroots level to ensure transparency and participation, using the decentralized structure for checks and balances.

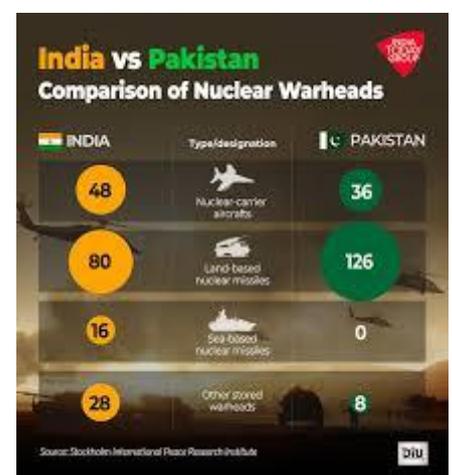
### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is a crucial mechanism for **purifying India's electoral rolls**, thereby reinforcing the integrity and transparency of its democratic process. This topic is highly significant for **UPSC GS Paper-II** (Governance, Constitution, Polity: Constitutional bodies and their functions, electoral reforms), as it highlights the **ECI's role** in upholding free and fair elections, the **legal framework** governing electoral rolls, and the complex **political challenges** involved in managing a dynamic electorate.

## 7. India's Stance on Pakistan's Nuclear Proliferation History

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Context of MEA Statement:** The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) statement came in the backdrop of US President Donald Trump's comment that Pakistan was among the countries secretly testing nuclear weapons, a claim Pakistan denied.
- **India's Allegation:** India asserted that Pakistan's history is centered around "**clandestine and illegal nuclear activities**", which include **decades of smuggling, export control violations, and secret partnerships**.
- **Key Proliferation Network:** India specifically referenced the **A.Q. Khan network** (named after Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, a key figure in Pakistan's nuclear program), which was implicated in the **illegal transfer of nuclear technology** to countries like Iran, Libya, and North Korea.
- **Definition - Nuclear Proliferation:** The spread of nuclear weapons, fissionable material, and weapons-applicable nuclear technology and information to nations not recognized as "Nuclear Weapon States" under the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**.
- **International Outreach:** India highlighted that it has **consistently drawn the attention of the international community** to these aspects of Pakistan's





proliferation record, viewing Trump's comment as a potential validation of its long-standing concerns.

### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **CTBT and Pakistan:** Pakistan, like India, is **not a signatory** to the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), 1996**, which bans all nuclear explosions for testing purposes. Pakistan claims its last test was in 1998 and supports UN resolutions seeking a comprehensive ban.
- **Export Control Regimes:** The smuggling and export control violations cited by India relate to breaches of international rules designed to prevent the transfer of sensitive technology, notably those governed by multi-lateral regimes like the **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)** and the **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)**. India is a member of MTCR but is still seeking NSG membership.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The MEA's response leverages a global development (President Trump's statement) to reiterate India's core strategic concern regarding Pakistan's past and present nuclear security—specifically the risk of **proliferation** and the potential for **leakage of nuclear material or technology to non-state actors**. This topic is highly relevant for **UPSC GS Paper-II** (India and its neighbourhood- relations) and **GS Paper-III** (Security issues, science and technology), as it deals with the critical challenges of **nuclear security**, **international non-proliferation efforts**, and the **geopolitical dynamics** of the India-Pakistan relationship.

## 8. HAL-GE Engine Deal: Boosting Tejas and Defence Indigenisation

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Major Procurement Deal:** Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) sealed a **\$1 billion (approx. ₹8,870 crore)** deal with US defence major **GE Aerospace** for the procurement of **113 F404-GE-IN20 jet engines** and a support package.
- **Programme Support:** The engines are specifically intended to power the **97 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk1A** jets being procured by the Indian Air Force (IAF) under a separate ₹62,370 crore deal with HAL signed in September 2025.
- **Engine Type and Features:** The **F404-GE-IN20** is an **afterburning turbofan engine**, which is the **highest thrust variant** in the F404 family, tailored for the Tejas. It produces a maximum thrust of **84 kN (19,000 lbf)** with the afterburner and features a **Full Authority Digital Engine Control (FADEC)** system.
- **Delivery Timeline:** The supply of the engines is scheduled to begin from **2027** and is expected to be completed by **2032**, aiming to ensure smooth production and delivery timelines for the LCA fleet and avoid supply chain delays.
- **Geopolitical Context:** The finalisation of the deal underscores the **strengthening Indo-US defence partnership**, despite occasional trade tensions (like the US tariffs mentioned in the source).



### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **Atmanirbhar Bharat:** This deal is a crucial step for India's "**Make in India**" and "**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**" initiatives in the defence sector. While the engines are procured from the US, they power



the **indigenously designed and manufactured LCA Tejas Mk1A**, which has an indigenous content of about **65%**.

- **Future Technology Transfer:** HAL is simultaneously negotiating an **80% technology transfer** for GE's more powerful **F414 engines**, which are planned to power the future **LCA Mk2** and the **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)**, a step crucial for true self-reliance in aerospace propulsion technology.
- **Constitutional Provision:** The deal aligns with the Directive Principles of State Policy under **Article 51(c)**, promoting respect for **international law and treaty obligations**, which govern such defence procurement and strategic partnerships.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

This procurement deal is a **critical enabler** for the **LCA Tejas Mk1A programme**, which is vital for **modernising the Indian Air Force fleet** (replacing ageing jets like the MiG-21) and maintaining the country's **operational readiness**. The topic is highly relevant for **UPSC GS Paper-III** (Science and Technology: Indigenisation of technology and developing new technology; Defence Technology) and **GS Paper-II** (India and its neighbourhood- relations, Defence Cooperation), highlighting India's **defence procurement policy** and its journey towards **defence manufacturing self-sufficiency**.

## 9. SC Calls for Reform of Colonial-Era Property Laws

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Judicial Observation:** The Supreme Court (SC) described the current experience of buying and selling property in India as "**traumatic**," noting that **property disputes account for 66% of all civil litigation** in the country.
- **Direction for Reform:** The Court specifically directed the **Law Commission of India** to prepare a report on restructuring century-old, **colonial-era laws** governing property transactions, including the **Transfer of Property Act, 1882**, the **Registration Act, 1908**, and the **Stamp Act, 1899**.
- **Key Hurdles Identified:** The factors hindering efficient transactions include **fake documentation**, **land encroachments**, **delayed verification**, **red tape** at sub-registrar offices, and the role of "**intermediaries**."
- **Technology Adoption:** The SC urged the Central Government to take the lead in adopting **Blockchain Technology** to make the property registration process **transparent, secure, and easier** by creating an immutable, distributed ledger for land records and ownership histories.
- **Definition - Blockchain Technology:** A **decentralized, distributed ledger technology** that securely records transactions across many computers, making the recorded data virtually **tamper-proof** or immutable. Its application in land records (Land-Blockchains) can prevent fraud and eliminate intermediaries.



### Additional Key Points & Constitutional Provisions

- **Fundamental Right Context:** The SC observed that the "constitutionally protected right to own immovable property inherently includes the freedom to freely acquire, possess and dispose of it at



will." This right is a **Constitutional Right** under **Article 300A** (after the 44th Amendment Act, 1978).

- **Federal Structure:** Land is a "**State Subject**" under **Entry 18** of the **State List (List II)** of the **Seventh Schedule** of the Constitution, which is why registration procedures vary from state to state, making comprehensive, uniform reform challenging.
- **Institutional Maturity:** The Court noted that the efficiency and transparency of property transactions are "demonstrative of a nation's institutional maturity," linking property reform directly to governance standards.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The SC judgment underscores the **urgent need for systemic legal and technological reform** in India's land and property governance. This is highly relevant for **UPSC GS Paper-II** (Governance, Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions) and **GS Paper-III** (Indian Economy: Land Reforms, Effects of Liberalization, Infrastructure), focusing on the **role of the judiciary in driving policy reform**, the importance of **land as a factor of production**, and the application of **e-governance/cutting-edge technology** (Blockchain) to address colonial legal legacies and reduce civil litigation burden.

## 10. Vande Mataram: History, Controversy, and National Song Status

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Historical Origin:** 'Vande Mataram' was composed by **Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay** on November 7, 1875, and was first published as part of his novel '**Anandamath**' (1882). It quickly became the "**maha mantra**" and rallying cry of the Indian freedom struggle.
- **1937 Congress Decision:** Prime Minister Modi asserted that in 1937, the **Congress adopted a truncated version** (the first two stanzas) of the six-stanza song as the **party's National Song**, dropping "crucial verses" (which often contained references to Goddess Durga/Hindu deities).
- **PM's Allegation & Context:** PM Modi alleged that the removal of these verses "**fragmented the song**" and "**sowed the seeds of division of the country,**" linking this historical decision to a "divisive thinking" that he claims remains a challenge today.
- **Adoption as National Song:** On **January 24, 1950**, the **Constituent Assembly** formally adopted the **first two stanzas** of Vande Mataram as the **National Song of the Republic of India**, giving it equal status to the National Anthem, '**Jana Gana Mana**'.
- **Controversy Rationale:** The 1937 decision was driven by the concern that the later stanzas, which personified the motherland as the Goddess Durga, might be **religiously sensitive** or **irritating to certain communities (Muslims)**, as noted in historical records, including letters exchanged between leaders like Nehru and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.



### Additional Key Points & Constitutional Provisions

- **Status of National Song:** While the **National Anthem ('Jana Gana Mana')** is governed by **Article 51A(a)** (Fundamental Duty to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem), the **National Song ('Vande Mataram')** is a **symbol of**



**national pride** rooted in the freedom struggle and does **not** have the same constitutional enforceability as a Fundamental Duty.

- **Tagore's Influence:** Congress records and historian accounts suggest that the decision to limit the singing to the first two stanzas in 1937 was influenced by the advice of **Rabindranath Tagore**, who sang the song publicly for the first time at the 1896 Calcutta Congress session.

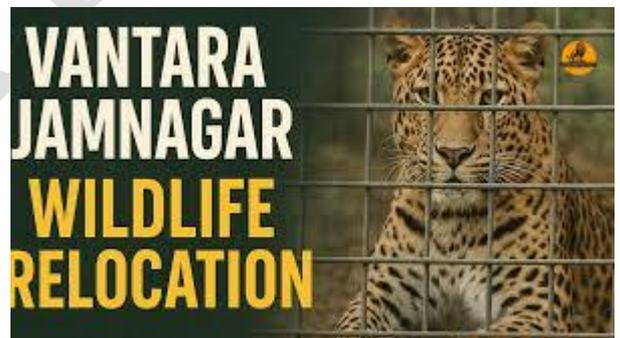
### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The public discourse surrounding the 1937 truncation of Vande Mataram highlights the **complex intersection of history, nationalism, religious sentiment, and political symbolism** that shaped modern India. This issue is highly relevant for **UPSC GS Paper-I** (Modern Indian History: Important contributors and contributions from different parts of the country; Post-independence Consolidation) and **GS Paper-II** (Polity: Constitutional bodies, Political Philosophy), as it touches upon the **evolution of national identity symbols, the role of the Congress party in the freedom struggle, and historical debates over communal politics** leading up to Partition.

## 11. Human-Leopard Conflict and Vantara Rehabilitation Proposal

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Conflict Escalation:** Western Maharashtra, particularly the Pune district (Junnar, Shirur, etc.), is experiencing a significant **rise in human-leopard conflict**, leading to panic and public anger due to fatal attacks on humans. This is partly attributed to the **sharp increase in the leopard population** in the region (Maharashtra population rose from 1,690 in 2018 to 1,985 in 2022).
- **Relocation Proposal:** The Maharashtra government submitted a proposal to the **Central Zoo Authority (CZA)** seeking approval to **relocate 50 leopards** (mostly long-term residents of rescue centers) to **Vantara** (meaning 'Star of the Forest') in Jamnagar, Gujarat.
- **Definition - Vantara:** It is a large-scale, private **animal rescue, care, and rehabilitation initiative** established by the **Reliance Foundation** (Greens Zoological Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre - GZRRC) in Jamnagar, Gujarat. It is an **off-display facility** (not open to the public) and operates under CZA regulatory frameworks.
- **Purpose of Relocation:** The primary goal is to **decongest the saturated government rescue centers** in Maharashtra (like the Manikdoh Leopard Rescue Centre) to create space for newly rescued, injured, or conflict-prone animals, thereby facilitating better emergency response.
- **Additional Measures:** The state government is simultaneously implementing other measures, including **district-level conflict mitigation strategies** and seeking Central government permission for **birth-control/sterilization** measures to manage the rising leopard population humanely.



### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **Legal Framework:** The translocation of wild animals from a state facility to a rescue center, even if private, requires approval from the **Central Zoo Authority (CZA)**, a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**, constituted under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (WPA)**.



- **Conservation Status:** The **Indian Leopard** (*Panthera pardus*) is listed under **Schedule I** of the WPA, 1972 (affording it the highest protection), and is categorized as '**Vulnerable**' (VU) on the **IUCN Red List**.
- **Controversy:** The use of a **private facility** for the long-term housing of wild animals, particularly large numbers, has sparked debate regarding the ethics, transparency, and long-term implications for wildlife conservation and land use.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

This event encapsulates the escalating challenge of **Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC)**, especially with highly adaptable species like leopards, driven by habitat fragmentation and increased prey availability in agro-pastoral landscapes. It is a critical topic for **UPSC GS Paper-III** (Environment, Biodiversity, Conservation, and Security Issues in North-East), illustrating the **interplay between conservation efforts, public safety, and the role of private/corporate entities** in wildlife management under the regulatory oversight of the CZA.

## 12. Sustainable Fisheries Rules for India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

### Key Features & UPSC Relevance

- **Regulatory Framework:** The Government of India has notified the "**Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Rules, 2025**," fulfilling a Budget 2025-26 announcement aimed at unlocking the potential of India's vast marine sector and the Blue Economy vision.
- **Empowerment and Priority:** The Rules **prioritize Fishermen Cooperative Societies and Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs)** for deep-sea fishing operations and managing advanced vessels, ensuring the benefits of deep-sea fishing accrue primarily to small-scale fishers.
- **Mother-and-Child Vessel Concept:** A key infrastructural reform is the introduction of the **mother-and-child vessel concept**, which allows **mid-sea transshipment** of catch under strict monitoring. This is crucial for **boosting exports of high-value fish** (like tuna) from remote regions like the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.
- **Sustainability and Conservation:** The rules take a firm stand against **harmful fishing practices** such as **LED light fishing, pair trawling, and bull trawling**. They also mandate the development of **Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)** and promote **Mariculture** (sea-cage farming, seaweed cultivation) to reduce nearshore fishing pressure.
- **Digital Access and Traceability:** A transparent, digital **Access Pass** mechanism is introduced via the **ReALCRaft portal** for mechanized vessels operating in the EEZ (traditional/small-scale fishers are exempted). This system is integrated with MPEDA/EIC to ensure **end-to-end traceability** and issue Fish Catch and Health Certificates for exports.
- **Coastal Security and Revenue Reform:** The rules enhance **sea safety** through mandatory transponders and **QR-Coded Aadhaar/Fishers ID Cards** (integrated with the **Nabhmitra** application). They also reform revenue norms, recognizing fish caught in the Indian EEZ as of '**Indian origin**' and not imports.





### Additional Key Points & Legal Provisions

- **Statutory Compliance:** The Rules are formulated to govern activities within India's **EEZ (up to 200 nautical miles)**, an area where India has **sovereign rights** for the purpose of exploring and exploiting resources, as defined by the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982**.
- **Financial Support Linkage:** Access to easy and affordable credit is explicitly linked to flagship central schemes, primarily the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** and the **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)**.
- **Tackling IUU Fishing:** The rules provide for framing a **National Plan of Action on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing** to deter illegal practices and align India with global fisheries governance standards.

### Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

These new rules represent a significant modernization of India's marine fisheries governance, balancing the imperatives of **economic growth (exports, deep-sea resource exploitation)**, **community welfare (priority to cooperatives, small fishers)**, and **ecological sustainability (ban on harmful practices, mariculture promotion)**. This is a critical topic for **UPSC GS Paper-III (Indian Economy: Mobilization of Resources, Development; Environment: Conservation and Marine Ecosystems)** and **GS Paper-II (Governance: Government Policies and Interventions)**, demonstrating a strategic policy shift towards a sustainable and inclusive **Blue Economy**.

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