



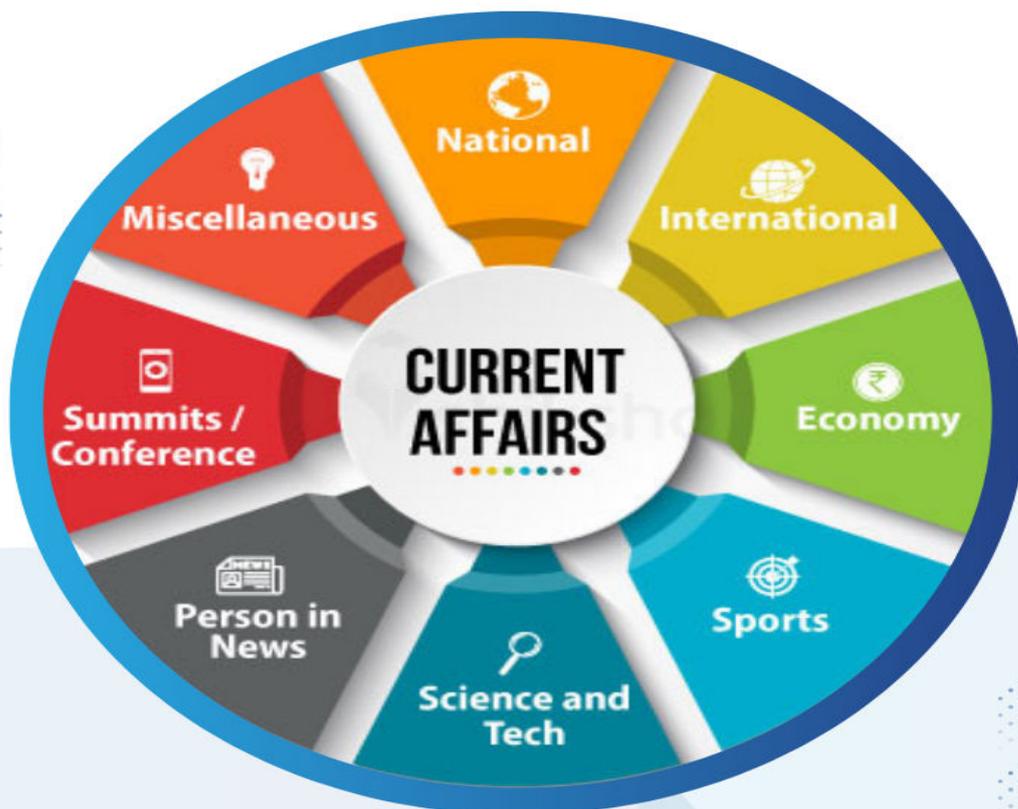
“ We help you reach for the star ”

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

## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION**

**DATE: 17/12/2025 (WEDNESDAY)**



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## 1. Ayush Expo & 2nd WHO Global Traditional Medicine Summit

- **Global Integration:** The Expo, held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, serves as a central pillar of the Second WHO Global Traditional Medicine Summit, aiming to integrate India's Ayush systems with global traditional practices into modern healthcare.
- **Scientific Validation:** It emphasizes evidence-informed approaches, showcasing the **Metallotherapeutics Zone** (purification of Bhasmas) and the scientific basis of Indian spices and medicinal plants to align traditional knowledge with contemporary medical standards.
- **Digital Innovation:** The event highlights the **Ayush Grid** (digital health architecture) and the **Ayush NextGen Start-ups Pavilion**, featuring AI-driven diagnostics, virtual reality Yoga, and predictive wellness tools.
- **Knowledge Protection:** A key focus is the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**, an internationally recognized tool designed to document ancient knowledge and prevent bio-piracy through patent monitoring.
- **Global Repository:** The World Health Organization (WHO) is launching the **Global Traditional Medicine Library (GTML)**, a digital repository intended to foster international research, data sharing, and evidence-based policymaking.
- **WHO GCTM Synergy:** The summit advances the goals of the **WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM)** established in Jamnagar, Gujarat, focusing on sustainability, equity, and nature-based health solutions.



### Key Definitions

- **Ayush:** An acronym for Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, and Homoeopathy.
- **Bio-piracy:** The unethical practice where indigenous knowledge or biological resources are patented by entities without permission or compensation to the original source communities.
- **Panchakarma:** A five-fold detoxification and rejuvenation treatment in Ayurveda involving therapies like Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya, and Raktamokshana.
- **Bhasma:** Herbo-mineral metallic preparations in Ayurveda processed through incineration to make them biocompatible and therapeutic.

### Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 47 (DPSP):** Mandates the State to regard the improvement of public health as among its primary duties, providing a constitutional basis for promoting Ayush.
- **National Ayush Mission (NAM):** A Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched to provide cost-effective Ayush services and strengthen institutional capacity.
- **Biological Diversity Act, 2002:** Provides the legal framework for the protection of traditional knowledge and equitable sharing of benefits arising from biological resources.
- **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017:** Advocates for "Mainstreaming of Ayush" to achieve universal health coverage and improve the doctor-to-population ratio.



## Conclusion

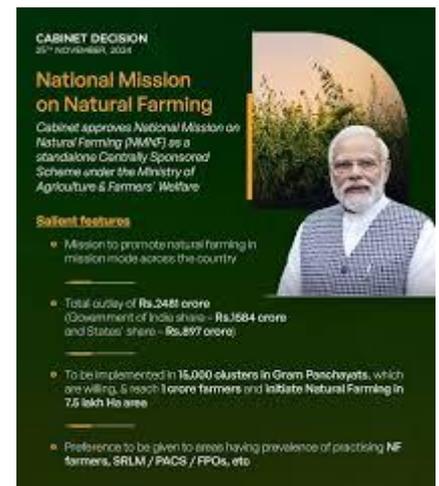
The Ayush Expo represents a strategic shift from traditional medicine being viewed as "alternative" to being recognized as a "complementary" pillar of global public health. By combining ancient wisdom with digital tools like the Ayush Grid and legal safeguards like TKDL, India is positioning itself as the global hub for holistic wellness. This collaboration with WHO ensures that traditional systems are governed by rigorous standards of safety, efficacy, and ethical innovation.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health; International groupings (WHO).
- **GS Paper III:** Science and Technology-indigenization of technology; Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Bio-piracy.
- **Prelims:** Definitions of Ayush components, TKDL, WHO GCTM location, and various flagship schemes like NAM.

## 2. National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF): A Paradigm Shift in Agriculture

- **Mission Overview:** The Union Cabinet approved the NMNF with an outlay of ₹2481 crore (Central share: ₹1584 crore; State share: ₹897 crore) up to March 2026, aimed at scaling up chemical-free, climate-resilient agriculture across India.
- **Input Cost Reduction:** The primary focus is shifting from "external-input-intensive" to "on-farm-input-based" farming, utilizing bio-inputs made within the farm to decrease farmers' debt and increase self-reliance (Atmanirbhar).
- **Livestock Integration:** The mission emphasizes an integrated model of agriculture and animal husbandry, specifically promoting the use of local cow breeds for preparing natural fertilizers like Jeevamrut and Ghanajeevamrut.
- **Knowledge and Research:** It seeks to strengthen agroecological research through the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), and Agricultural Universities to create location-specific packages of practices.
- **Standardization and Branding:** A major goal is the creation of a "Single National Brand" for natural produce, supported by farmer-friendly certification procedures to ensure premium market prices for chemical-free crops.
- **Soil Health and Ecosystems:** By eliminating synthetic chemicals, the mission aims to restore soil microbial activity, improve water retention, and promote nature-based sustainable farming systems.



## Key Definitions

- **Natural Farming:** A chemical-free, traditional Indian farming method (often called Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati) that relies on agro-ecology, livestock, and local resources rather than synthetic fertilizers or pesticides.
- **Agroecology:** The study of ecological processes applied to agricultural production systems, emphasizing the interaction between plants, animals, humans, and the environment.



- **Bio-inputs:** Natural formulations prepared on-farm (e.g., using cow dung, urine, jaggery, and pulse flour) that act as soil rejuvenators and pest repellents.

### Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 48 (DPSP):** Directs the State to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and to preserve and improve breeds.
- **Article 47:** Mandates the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living, which aligns with providing chemical-free, nutritious food through natural farming.
- **Article 51A(g):** Fundamental Duty to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife.
- **National Policy for Farmers, 2007:** Focuses on the economic well-being of farmers rather than just production, a goal served by the low-cost nature of NMNF.

### Conclusion

The National Mission on Natural Farming marks a strategic transition towards "Back to Basics" in Indian agriculture. By decoupling farming from expensive chemical inputs and industrial supply chains, the mission addresses the dual challenges of agrarian distress and environmental degradation. Success will depend on effective scientific validation by ICAR and the seamless integration of smallholder farmers into the proposed national branding and certification framework.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors; Issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- **GS Paper III:** Major crops-cropping patterns; Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Environmental pollution and degradation; Sustainable development.
- **Prelims:** Financial outlay fractions (Central/State share 1584/2481), components of Natural Farming, and institutions involved (ICAR/KVKs).

### 3. Delhi Pollution Crisis: Mandatory PUC for Refuelling & GRAP-IV Curbs

- **Refuelling Restriction:** Starting December 18, 2025, the Delhi government has mandated that fuel stations will only dispense petrol, diesel, or CNG to vehicles carrying a valid **Pollution Under Control (PUC)** certificate to curb tailpipe emissions.
- **Enforcement Mechanism:** Authorities will utilize **Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)** cameras and on-ground enforcement teams at petrol pumps and borders to verify PUC status and vehicle emission categories (BS norms).
- **GRAP-IV Activation:** Due to the AQI entering the "Severe Plus" category (exceeding 450), Stage IV of the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** is in effect, imposing a ban on the entry of non-BS-VI diesel vehicles from outside Delhi (except essential services).
- **Inter-State Coordination:** The pollution crisis has sparked political friction over stubble burning and AQI data "falsification," highlighting the challenge of regional air quality management across the Indo-Gangetic plain.
- **Legal Penalties:** Operating a vehicle without a valid PUC certificate now attracts a heavy fine of **₹10,000** under the amended Motor Vehicles Act, along with possible suspension of the driving license for three months.



- **Administrative Outlook:** The Environment Ministry has emphasized that while immediate curbs are necessary for public health, structural changes to clear Delhi's air require long-term cooperation rather than short-term seasonal fixes.



### Key Definitions

- **Pollution Under Control (PUC) Certificate:** A document issued after testing a vehicle's emission levels (CO, Hydrocarbons, etc.) to ensure they meet the prescribed national standards.
- **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP):** A set of emergency measures (Stage I to IV) implemented by the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** depending on the severity of air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region.
- **AQI (Air Quality Index):** A numerical scale used by government agencies to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become.

### Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 48A (DPSP):** Directs the State to endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.
- **Article 51A(g):** Imposes a Fundamental Duty on every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment.
- **Section 190(2) of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988:** Provides the legal basis for penalizing vehicles that violate air and noise pollution standards.
- **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986:** The umbrella legislation under which the CAQM and GRAP frameworks operate to regulate environmental pollutants.

### Conclusion

The "No PUC, No Fuel" policy marks a shift toward proactive, tech-driven enforcement in urban environmental governance. While such restrictive measures cause temporary public inconvenience, they are essential to internalize the environmental costs of vehicular pollution. However, the sustainable resolution of Delhi's air crisis depends on moving beyond "emergency responses" toward year-round structural reforms in transport and regional stubble management.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Statutory, regulatory, and various quasi-judicial bodies (CAQM, CPCB); Government policies and interventions.
- **GS Paper III:** Conservation, environmental pollution, and degradation; Environmental Impact Assessment.
- **Prelims:** Components of AQI (8 pollutants), difference between BS-IV and BS-VI norms, and the mandate of the CAQM.



## 4. District Business Reform Action Plan (D-BRAP) 2025: Localizing Ease of Doing Business

- **Mission Objective:** Launched by the DPIIT, D-BRAP 2025 aims to localize Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) reforms at the district level (Tier-II and Tier-III cities), focusing on District Collectorates, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and Development Authorities.
- **Reform Framework:** The plan identifies **154 specific reforms** across six key areas, including district-level service delivery, property record digitization, risk-based inspections, and strengthening of local industrial infrastructure.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** It mandates the transformation of **District Industries Centres (DICs)** into primary investor facilitation hubs, equipped with IT-enabled systems and trained staff to provide single-window clearances for MSMEs and startups.
- **Startup Growth in Smaller Cities:** A dedicated focus area is fostering entrepreneurship in non-metro regions through **Startup Cells**, which facilitate credit access, provide mentoring, and help onboard startups onto the **BHASKAR portal**.
- **Digital Governance:** The plan emphasizes "Last-Mile Delivery" through the digitization of cadastral maps, online mutation of property records, and the creation of district-level dashboards to track inspection timelines and grievance redressal.
- **Competitive Federalism:** Following the "State-led, District-driven" model, districts will be evaluated through an **evidence-based assessment** (including document checks and user feedback), promoting a competitive ecosystem for regional development.



### Key Definitions

- **DPIIT:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, the nodal agency under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for EoDB reforms.
- **BHASKAR Portal:** (Bharat Startup Knowledge Access Registry) A central digital platform providing a unified ecosystem for startups, investors, and mentors.
- **Single Window System:** A one-stop digital interface that allows businesses to submit applications for various licenses and approvals across multiple departments without physical visits.
- **Tier-II & Tier-III Cities:** Urban areas categorized by population size (typically 20,000 to 1,00,000); D-BRAP focuses on these to decentralize industrial growth from metros.

### Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 243W & 243G:** Pertaining to the powers and responsibilities of Municipalities and Panchayats, providing the constitutional basis for Urban Local Bodies and District administrations to handle economic development.
- **Seventh Schedule (State List):** Entries related to Agriculture, Land, and Local Government, where districts have primary jurisdiction to implement these business reforms.
- **Jan Vishwas Act, 2023:** Supports EoDB by decriminalizing minor technical and procedural defaults in various business-related laws, reducing the compliance burden at the local level.



- **MSME Development Act, 2006:** Provides the legal framework for the promotion, development, and enhancement of the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium enterprises, which D-BRAP seeks to implement on-ground.

### Conclusion

The transition from a State-level Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) to a District-level one (D-BRAP) signifies a move toward **hyper-local governance**. By empowering District Collectors and DICs, the government is addressing the "bottleneck" of grassroots bureaucracy. This shift is crucial for realizing the "Make in India" vision, as it ensures that the ease of starting a business is not just a policy on paper at the State capital but a reality for an entrepreneur in a remote district.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Government policies and interventions for development; Governance; Statutory and regulatory bodies (DPIIT); Issues relating to the management of Social Sector/Services.
- **GS Paper III:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and employment; Inclusive growth; Ease of Doing Business.
- **Prelims:** Nodal Ministry for BRAP/D-BRAP, features of BHASKAR portal, and the role of District Industries Centres (DICs).

## 5. U.S. National Security Strategy 2025: Implications for the Transatlantic Alliance

- **Strategic Pivot:** The Trump Administration's National Security Strategy (NSS) 2025 signals a move away from the post-1945 liberal international order toward a mercantilist, "America First" posture that prioritizes U.S. domestic interests over traditional European alliances.
- **Critique of Europe:** The 33-page document describes Europe as facing "civilizational erasure" due to liberal migration policies and a loss of national identity, suggesting that the U.S. will pivot support toward "patriotic European parties" rather than the European Union (EU).
- **Security Decoupling:** The NSS explicitly demands that Europe assume "primary responsibility for its own defense," signaling a conditional approach to NATO and a desire for "strategic stability with Russia" rather than active confrontation.
- **The Hague Investment Plan:** Reflecting U.S. pressure, NATO member states (at the June 2025 Hague Summit) agreed to a massive hike in defense spending—targeting **5% of GDP** by 2035—representing a doubling of the previous 2% baseline.
- **Erosion of Rules-Based Order:** The strategy targets transnational institutions and multilateral trading systems, viewing them as undermining national sovereignty and paving the way for a world where great powers define regional spheres of influence.
- **European Dilemma:** Europe faces a choice between attempting to appease the U.S. through increased defense purchases (as seen with Germany's recent military orders) or developing a truly independent European defense architecture that does not rely on American intelligence and hardware.





## Key Definitions

- **National Security Strategy (NSS):** A Congress-mandated document in the U.S. that outlines an administration's major security concerns and how it plans to address them using national power.
- **Mercantilism:** An economic policy designed to maximize exports and minimize imports through protectionist measures like tariffs and subsidies to increase national wealth.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** The ability of a state or group of states (like the EU) to pursue its own foreign policy and security goals without being overly dependent on other foreign powers.

## Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 5 (NATO Treaty):** The principle of collective defense, where an attack against one member is considered an attack against all. The 2025 NSS suggests this bond is now increasingly transactional.
- **Goldwater-Nichols Act (1986):** The U.S. federal law that mandates the President to regularly submit a National Security Strategy to Congress.
- **Article 2 (UN Charter):** Enshrines the principle of sovereign equality of all its members. The NSS's focus on "civilizational erasure" and support for specific political factions is viewed by some as a violation of the non-interference principle.

## Conclusion

The 2025 National Security Strategy marks a definitive end to the era of "unconditional" American security for Europe. By framing the transatlantic relationship in terms of cultural decay and economic trade imbalances, the Trump Administration has forced European leaders into a crisis of self-reliance. Whether this leads to a revitalized, independent European defense entity or a fractured continent of competing nationalist interests remains the primary geopolitical question of the decade.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests; International relations (NATO, EU); Important International institutions.
- **GS Paper III:** Security challenges and their management in border areas; Linkages of organized crime with terrorism (as related to regional stability).
- **Ethics (GS IV):** Ethical issues in international relations; The shift from a rules-based order to "might is right."

## 6. Gender Disparities in India's Organ Donation & Transplant Ecosystem

- **Paradox of Willingness:** Despite high posthumous donation intent reflected in 2024 driving license data (with women leading at 17%–27%), India ranks **67th globally** in deceased donations (\$0.8\$ per million) while performing significantly better in living donations.
- **The "Give-Receive" Skew:** A profound gender gap exists where women constitute over **60% of living donors** (often wives or mothers), yet men comprise nearly **65% of organ recipients**, particularly in liver transplants (70%) where medical need is often driven by male-concentrated lifestyle diseases.
- **Geographic Trends:** Women's willingness to donate posthumously is consistently higher across 17 of 21 major States, with **Delhi** reporting the highest female intent (27%) compared to its male counterpart (16%).



- **Systemic Disconnect:** The data suggests the "demand-supply" crisis is not due to public reluctance but a failure in hospital infrastructure to bridge the gap between a citizen's intent (pledge) and the actual execution of organ retrieval after brain death.
- **Sociocultural Coercion:** Qualitative insights link the high rate of female living donors to economic dependency and patriarchal structures, where men (as primary breadwinners) are often exempt from the risks of surgery, leaving women to "sacrifice" for the family's financial stability.
- **Policy Intervention:** To counter this, NOTTO has issued advisories suggesting a "One Nation, One Policy" approach, including removing domicile barriers and exploring additional priority points for women on waiting lists to restore gender equity.

### Key Definitions

- **Deceased (Cadaveric) Donation:** Retrieval of organs from a person declared **Brain Stem Dead** by an authorized medical board, where vital organs are still functional but the brain has irreversibly ceased.
- **Living Donation:** A healthy person donating one kidney or a portion of the liver/pancreas; in India, this accounts for over **90% of total transplants**.
- **NOTTO:** National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation; the apex federal body managing procurement, allotment, and the national donor-recipient registry.
- **Brain Stem Death (BSD):** A legal definition of death where all functions of the brain stem have permanently ceased; it is equivalent to cardiac death under Indian law.

### Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act (THOTA), 1994:** The primary legislation regulating removal, storage, and transplantation. It prohibits commercial trade and established the **Authorization Committee** to oversee non-related donations.
- **Article 21 (Right to Life):** The Judiciary has interpreted the right to health and access to life-saving transplants as an integral part of the Right to Life.
- **Articles 14 & 15:** Provide the constitutional basis to challenge gender-based discrimination in healthcare access and organ allocation.
- **Rules of 2025 (Amendments):** Recent updates aimed at simplifying protocols, removing age caps (formerly 65 years), and ending the requirement for state-specific domicile to register as a recipient.

### Conclusion

India's organ transplant landscape reflects a "crisis of execution" rather than a "crisis of conscience." While women demonstrate higher altruistic intent, they remain marginalized as recipients and over-utilized as living donors. Transforming this "Architecture of Sacrifice" into a robust deceased-donor program requires digitizing donor pledges, strengthening retrieval infrastructure in public hospitals, and dismantling the patriarchal economic barriers that dictate who lives and who gives.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Government policies for the health sector; Issues relating to the management of Social Sector/Services (Gender bias in health).
- **GS Paper I:** Social Issues (Patriarchy and its impact on women's health autonomy).



- **GS Paper IV:** Ethics in International and National Relations (Ethical dilemmas of living vs. deceased donation; consent vs. coercion).
- **Prelims:** Nodal agency (NOTTO), legal status of Brain Stem Death, and the provisions of THOTA 1994.

## 7. Governance Challenges and the Maoist Insurgency in Fifth Schedule Areas

- **Institutional Failure of the Fifth Schedule:** Conceptualized as a "social contract" for tribal protection, the Fifth Schedule's promise has remained largely performatory. Despite provisions for **Tribal Advisory Councils (TACs)** and special powers of the **Governor**, administrative neglect and the retention of colonial-era rules have led to systemic exploitation of Adivasis.
- **The Governance-Security Nexus:** While the state has traditionally relied on a "two-pronged" approach (security and development), it has often overlooked the "governance deficit." This deficit—characterized by weak justice redressal and lack of local representation—created a vacuum that Maoists filled with parallel governance structures like **Janatan Sarkar**.
- **Administrative Alienation:** A major driver of tribal discontent is the overwhelming presence of "outsiders" in local administration. As noted by the **Mungekar Committee (2009)**, these officials often carry biases and fail to execute tribal safeguards, leading to a deep trust deficit in institutions like the police, revenue, and forest departments.
- **Erosion of Rights-Based Legislations:** Critical legal tools like **PESA (1996)** and the **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006**, face resistance from state governments eager to unlock mineral wealth. The frequent violation of **Gram Sabha** consent for land acquisition has further dispossessed millions of tribals, pushing them toward insurgent ideologies.
- **Persistence of Structural Bottlenecks:** While basic infrastructure (roads, electricity) has improved, core service delivery in justice, health, and education remains unsatisfactory. Permanent bureaucracies still dominate self-governing bodies, rendering tribal representation symbolic rather than substantive.
- **Need for a New Governance Charter:** Moving forward, experts advocate for a shift toward the **Sixth Schedule model** (Autonomous District Councils) for Fifth Schedule areas. This would provide real financial and administrative autonomy to tribal groups, moving beyond mere welfare toward genuine political empowerment.



### Key Definitions

- **Fifth Schedule:** A constitutional provision (Article 244(1)) for the administration of "Scheduled Areas" in states other than Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram, focusing on tribal protection.
- **PESA (1996):** The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, which aims to provide self-governance through Gram Sabhas for people living in Scheduled Areas.
- **Janatan Sarkar:** A revolutionary "people's government" established by Maoists in their strongholds to provide parallel services like justice (kangaroo courts), schools, and healthcare.
- **Red Corridor:** A region in eastern, central, and southern India that has experienced considerable Naxalite–Maoist insurgency.



## Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 244(1):** Specifically applies the Fifth Schedule to Scheduled Areas.
- **Paragraph 5 of Fifth Schedule:** Grants the Governor discretionary power to restrict the application of Central/State laws and make regulations for "peace and good government," including checking land alienation.
- **Article 275(1):** Provides for special grants from the Union to States for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes and to raise the level of administration in Scheduled Areas.
- **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006:** Recognizes and vests forest rights and occupation in Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDSTs).
- **Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Act, 2016:** Criticized for potentially diluting tribal land rights in the name of afforestation.

## Conclusion

The Maoist movement in India is as much a crisis of governance as it is of security. The historical failure to implement the "social contract" of the Fifth Schedule has allowed insurgency to take root in the tribal heartland. To achieve a "post-Maoist India," the state must transition from a top-down developmental model to a bottom-up governance model that restores tribal agency, protects land rights, and ensures that local administration is representative of the people it serves.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Governance; Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services; Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States (Fifth and Sixth Schedules).
- **GS Paper III:** Internal Security; Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security; Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
- **Prelims:** Composition of Tribes Advisory Councils, powers of the Governor in Scheduled Areas, and the states covered under the Fifth Schedule.

## 8. India's West Asia Strategy & Strategic Leap in Africa (2025)

- **India-Jordan Partnership for Syria:** During his visit to Amman, PM Narendra Modi proposed a joint India-Jordan collaboration for the reconstruction of Syria's war-ravaged infrastructure, signaling India's intent to play a larger economic and stabilizing role in the Levant beyond traditional bilateral trade.
- **Support for Gaza Peace Plan:** In Tel Aviv, EAM S. Jaishankar explicitly reiterated India's support for the "**Trump Peace Plan**" (a 20-point proposal focusing on a technocratic Palestinian committee and reconstruction), marking a significant alignment with the new U.S. administration's regional framework while emphasizing "zero tolerance" for terrorism.
- **Strategic De-hyphenation:** India continues its sophisticated balancing act, engaging Jordan and Ethiopia while simultaneously deepening defense and security ties with Israel, ensuring that its regional interests are insulated from the complex intra-regional conflicts of West Asia.
- **Elevation of India-Ethiopia Ties:** PM Modi's visit to Addis Ababa resulted in elevating bilateral relations to a "**Strategic Partnership.**" Key outcomes include MoUs on UN Peacekeeping training,



debt restructuring under the G20 Common Framework, and the establishment of a National Data Centre in Ethiopia.

- **Highest Civilian Honour:** PM Modi was conferred with the "**Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia**," the country's highest award, making him the first global head of state to receive it, underscoring India's growing influence as a leader of the Global South.
- **Naval & Connectivity Focus:** The three-nation tour (Jordan, Ethiopia, Oman) reinforces India's "**Indo-Littoral Strategy**," securing maritime access at the Port of Duqm (Oman) and strengthening ties with the Horn of Africa to safeguard trade routes against regional volatility.

### Key Definitions

- **Trump Peace Plan (2025):** A 20-point U.S.-led initiative for Gaza that includes a permanent ceasefire, hostage exchange, and the establishment of an apolitical Palestinian "Board of Peace" to oversee reconstruction.
- **Strategic De-hyphenation:** India's foreign policy of treating its relationships with conflicting nations (like Israel and Palestine, or Iran and Saudi Arabia) as independent of each other.
- **Nishan of Ethiopia:** The highest state award of Ethiopia, historically signifying great honor and civilizational bond.
- **UNRWA:** United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees; an agency India has historically funded, currently facing legal challenges and bans within Israeli jurisdiction.

### Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 51 (DPSP):** Mandates that the State shall endeavor to promote international peace and security and maintain just and honorable relations between nations, forming the core of India's West Asia diplomacy.
- **G20 Common Framework:** A multilateral agreement for debt treatment beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI); India's MoU with Ethiopia on debt restructuring falls under this legal-economic framework.
- **Strategic Partnership Agreement:** A formal diplomatic framework that outlines specific areas of cooperation (Defense, Technology, Trade) between two sovereign nations, legally elevating their ties above routine bilateral relations.

### Conclusion

India's synchronized high-level diplomacy in Amman, Tel Aviv, and Addis Ababa reflects its transition from a "passive observer" to an "active architect" in the Afro-Eurasian geography. By offering its expertise in reconstruction (Syria) and digital public infrastructure (Ethiopia), India is successfully leveraging its "soft power" and economic pragmatism to maintain strategic autonomy. The support for the Gaza Peace Plan further demonstrates New Delhi's willingness to work with global powers to ensure regional stability, which is vital for its energy and maritime security.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests; Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.



- **GS Paper III:** Security challenges and their management in border areas; Infrastructure (Energy and Connectivity).
- **Prelims:** Locations of Amman, Tel Aviv, Addis Ababa, and Duqm; Details of the G20 Common Framework; Awards received by the PM.

## 9. Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill, 2025: Higher Education Overhaul

- **Unified Regulatory Architecture:** The VBSA Bill, 2025, proposes a single overarching commission to replace existing bodies like the **University Grants Commission (UGC)**, **AICTE**, and **NCTE**, effectively ending the fragmented regulatory regime for technical, teacher, and general higher education.
- **Separation of Funding from Regulation:** In a major structural shift aligned with **NEP 2020**, grant-disbursal powers are being removed from the regulator and transferred to the **Ministry of Education**. This "conscious" move aims to minimize conflicts of interest and allow the regulator to focus purely on academic quality and standards.
- **Three-Vertical Specialization:** The framework establishes three autonomous councils under the VBSA: the **Regulatory Council** (Viniyaman Parishad) for governance, the **Accreditation Council** (Gunvatta Parishad) for quality assessment, and the **Standards Council** (Manak Parishad) for setting learning outcomes.
- **"Light but Tight" Regulation:** Following the National Education Policy vision, the Bill emphasizes reduced bureaucratic interference through a technology-driven **single-window interactive system** for self-disclosure, paired with strong accountability and heavy monetary penalties for non-compliance.
- **Global and Institutional Autonomy:** The Bill provides a roadmap for Indian universities to set up offshore campuses and regulates the entry of foreign universities. It also links institutional autonomy to accreditation scores, encouraging a performance-based "graded autonomy" model.
- **Parliamentary Oversight:** Due to concerns over "executive overreach" and the potential "politicization of grants," the Bill has been referred to a **31-member Joint Committee of Parliament (JPC)** for detailed scrutiny and stakeholder consultation.

### Key Definitions

- **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA):** The proposed apex statutory commission consisting of 12 members that will provide strategic direction and coordinate the specialized education councils.
- **Conflict of Interest (in Education):** A situation where the body setting academic standards is also responsible for funding, potentially leading to compromised quality checks to justify financial allocations.
- **Outcome-Based Accreditation:** A shift from assessing inputs (infrastructure, faculty count) to measuring outcomes (student learning, research impact, employability).
- **Viniyaman, Gunvatta, and Manak Parishad:** Respectively refer to the Regulatory, Quality/Accreditation, and Standards councils under the VBSA umbrella.

### Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Entry 66 (Union List, 7th Schedule):** Provides the Parliament the power for "coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions." This is the primary legal basis for the VBSA Bill.



- **Entry 25 (Concurrent List):** Covers "Education, including technical education, medical education and universities," allowing both Centre and States to legislate, though Union laws prevail in case of conflict.
- **UGC Act, 1956:** The landmark legislation that created the University Grants Commission, which the VBSA Bill seeks to repeal.
- **Article 19(1)(a):** While primarily regarding freedom of speech, judicial interpretations often link academic freedom and institutional autonomy as essential components of democratic expression.

## Conclusion

The VBSA Bill, 2025, represents the most significant structural reform in Indian higher education since 1956. By separating the "cheque-book" (funding) from the "rule-book" (regulation), the government seeks to foster a more professional and transparent academic environment. However, the success of this "Viksit Bharat" vision depends on ensuring that the Ministry's direct control over funding does not stifle academic dissent or regional diversity, making the ongoing JPC deliberations crucial for maintaining the federal balance in education.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education; Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies; Government policies and interventions for development.
- **GS Paper III:** Issues related to planning, mobilization of resources, and growth (impact of education on human capital).
- **Mains Focus:** The debate on centralization vs. decentralization in education; "Light but Tight" regulatory philosophy; Federalism concerns in Concurrent List subjects.

## 10. The Repealing and Amending Bill, 2025: Cleaning the Legal Statute

- **Comprehensive Legal Purge:** The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha have passed the **Repealing and Amending Bill, 2025**, which targets **71 obsolete Acts** for removal or amendment. This is part of a larger ongoing project under which **1,577 redundant laws** have been repealed since 2014 to streamline the Indian legal system.
- **Targeting Colonial Imprints:** A key objective of the Bill is to dismantle the "colonial mindset" by repealing laws that have lost relevance in modern India. Notable examples include the **Indian Tramways Act, 1886**, and discriminatory provisions within the **Indian Succession Act, 1925**, regarding the validation (probate) of wills.
- **Types of Acts Repealed:** Of the 71 Acts, **65 are Amendment Acts** whose changes have already been integrated into principal legislations, making their separate existence redundant. The remaining are **Principal Acts** like the *Levy Sugar Price Equalisation Fund Act, 1976*, which no longer serve a functional purpose.
- **Correcting Drafting Errors:** The Bill serves a corrective function by rectifying technical and formal defects in existing laws. For instance, it amends the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**, to replace the word "prevention" with "preparation" in specific sub-sections to better reflect operational realities.



- **Updating Terminologies:** It amends the **General Clauses Act, 1897**, and the **Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**, to modernize terminologies related to "registered posts" and other administrative communications, ensuring they align with contemporary postal and digital standards.
- **Ease of Living & Governance:** By reducing the "compliance burden" (calculated at over 40,000 items in the last decade), the legislation aims to improve the "Ease of Living" for citizens and "Ease of Doing Business" for enterprises by removing legal traps and procedural clutter.

### Key Definitions

- **Obsolete Law:** A statute that is no longer used, has lost its practical utility, or has been superseded by more recent and comprehensive legislation.
- **Amendment Act:** A law passed specifically to change, add to, or omit parts of an existing (Principal) Act. Once these changes are merged into the original law, the Amendment Act itself becomes a "dead letter."
- **Probate:** The official proving of a will in court. The 2025 Bill removes the requirement for probate in certain cases to eliminate discriminatory community-based legal hurdles.
- **Jan Vishwas Approach:** A governance philosophy focused on decriminalizing minor procedural lapses and shifting from criminal penalties to civil fines to build trust between the state and citizens.

### Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 245:** Grants Parliament the power to make laws for the whole or any part of the territory of India, which implicitly includes the power to repeal them.
- **General Clauses Act, 1897:** The "law of all laws" in India, which provides the standard definitions and rules for interpreting and repealing central acts. Section 6 of this Act ensures that a repeal does not revive anything not in force at the time or affect rights already acquired.
- **Law Commission of India (248th to 251st Reports):** These reports provided the foundational recommendations for identifying "redundant" laws that clog the justice delivery system.
- **Seventh Schedule (Union List):** Most laws being repealed fall under the Union List, where Parliament has exclusive jurisdiction.

### Conclusion

The passage of the **Repealing and Amending Bill, 2025**, marks a persistent effort toward "legal hygiene." By scrubbing 71 redundant statutes, the government is not just simplifying the India Code but also reinforcing the principle of "**Minimum Government, Maximum Governance.**" While critics argue over the speed of such repeals, the removal of colonial-era baggage and technical errors is a necessary step toward making the law more accessible and less intimidating for the common citizen.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II:** Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions; Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors; Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.
- **GS Paper IV:** Laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance (the ethical need for clear, non-discriminatory laws).
- **Mains Focus:** The role of the Law Commission in legal reform; Impact of "Ease of Living" on social justice; The debate on "Executive vs. Legislative" efficiency in law-making.