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FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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1. Kerala's Malayalam Bhasha Bill, 2025: Linguistic Minority Concerns

- **The Legislative Move:** The Kerala Assembly recently passed the Malayalam Bhasha Bill, 2025, which mandates Malayalam as the compulsory first language in all government and aided schools across the state up to Class 10.
- **Inter-State Friction:** The Karnataka government has formally objected to the Bill, sending a delegation from the Karnataka Border Area Development Authority to meet the Kerala Governor, urging him to withhold assent.
- **Linguistic Minority Rights:** The primary contention lies in the Kasaragod district, where approximately 70% of the population is Kannada-speaking; critics argue that forcing Malayalam as the first language undermines their right to primary education in their mother tongue.
- **Constitutional Challenge:** Karnataka asserts the Bill violates Articles 350 and 350A, which mandate the state to protect linguistic minorities and provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage.
- **Historical Precedent:** This is not the first instance of such legislation; a similar Bill passed by the Kerala Assembly in 2017 was previously rejected by the President of India following similar constitutional concerns.
- **Broader Implications:** The dispute adds to existing tensions between the two states, recently exacerbated by administrative disagreements over demolitions and border-area management.

Key Definitions

Linguistic Minorities: A group of people whose mother tongue is different from that of the majority in the state or a part of a state. In India, these rights are protected to ensure cultural and educational preservation. **Assent to Bills:** The process by which the Governor or President signs a Bill passed by the legislature, making it an Act. Under Article 200, a Governor can grant assent, withhold it, or reserve the Bill for the President's consideration.



Constitutional and Legal Provisions

Article 350: Every person is entitled to submit a representation for the redress of any grievance to any officer or authority of the Union or a State in any of the languages used in the Union or in the State. **Article 350A:** It shall be the endeavor of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups. **Article 350B:** Provides for the appointment of a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities by the President to investigate matters relating to safeguards provided for them. **Article 29:** Protects the interests of minorities, stating that any section of citizens residing in India having a distinct language, script, or culture of its own shall have the right to **conserve the same**.

Conclusion

The dispute over the Malayalam Bhasha Bill, 2025, highlights the delicate balance between promoting a state's official language and safeguarding the constitutional rights of linguistic minorities. While states have the legislative competence to determine educational curricula, such powers are not absolute and must align with the federal spirit and specific safeguards provided under Part XVII of the Constitution. The resolution of this issue will likely depend on the Governor's discretion or a potential presidential intervention, mirroring the 2017 outcome.

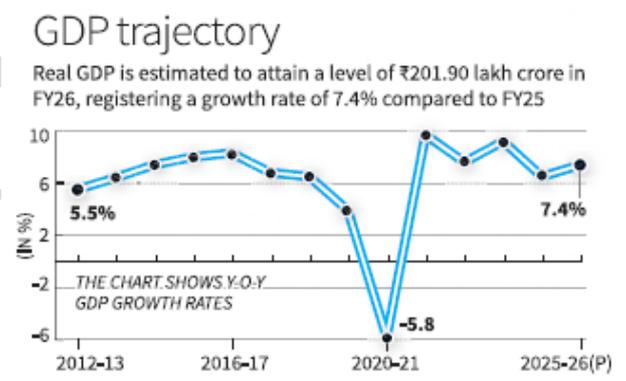


UPSC Relevance

General Studies Paper II: This topic is critical for sections on Federalism, Inter-State Relations, and Constitutional Provisions for Minorities. It touches upon the Governor's powers (Article 200), the protection of minority rights (Articles 29, 350A), and the role of the Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities. It also serves as a case study for "Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure."

2. Union Government Projects 7.4% GDP Growth for FY26

- **Robust Projections:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has estimated India's real GDP growth at 7.4% for the financial year 2025-26, a notable increase from the 6.5% recorded in FY25.
- **Fiscal Foundation:** These First Advance Estimates (FAE) peg nominal GDP growth at 8%, serving as the critical baseline for the upcoming Union Budget's revenue and deficit calculations.
- **Quarterly Deceleration:** Despite a strong first half (Q1 at 7.8% and Q2 at 8.2%), the government anticipates a slowdown in the second half of the year, with average growth expected to dip to 6.8%.
- **Sectoral Drivers:** Growth is primarily anchored by a resilient tertiary sector (projected 9.1% expansion) and a rebound in manufacturing (7.0%), offsetting moderate performance in agriculture (3.1%).
- **External Headwinds:** The optimistic outlook persists despite a 50% U.S. tariff on Indian exports, which has severely impacted labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparel, and engineering goods.
- **Consumption Trends:** Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) is forecast to grow at 7%, slightly slower than the previous year, despite government efforts to stimulate demand through tax cuts.



Key Definitions

Real vs. Nominal GDP: Real GDP is calculated at constant prices (base year 2011-12) to reflect actual physical output by removing inflation, whereas Nominal GDP is calculated at current market prices. **First Advance Estimates (FAE):** These are the first official GDP forecasts for the full year, released in early January using the "benchmark-indicator method" by extrapolating data from the first 7-8 months. **GDP Deflator:** A measure of the level of prices of all new, domestically produced, finished goods and services in an economy; it is the ratio of Nominal GDP to Real GDP.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

Article 112: Mandates the presentation of the "Annual Financial Statement" (Union Budget). The GDP estimates provided by MoSPI form the statistical basis for the Budget's fiscal math. **FRBM Act, 2003:** The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act requires the government to set targets for fiscal deficit as a percentage of GDP. Accurate GDP estimation is vital for legal compliance with these targets. **Collection of Statistics Act, 2008:** Provides the legal framework for the NSO (National Statistical Office) to collect data from various industrial and household sources to compile national accounts. **Article 280:** While primarily about the Finance Commission, the division of taxes between Union and States is deeply tied to the GDP and GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) figures derived from these estimates.



Conclusion

India's projected 7.4% growth underscores its position as a resilient major economy amidst global protectionist trends. However, the anticipated slowdown in the latter half of FY26 and the cooling of private consumption suggest that domestic demand and export competitiveness remain vulnerable. The narrow gap between nominal (8%) and real (7.4%) growth indicates a historically low inflation environment (deflator), which, while beneficial for consumers, may pose challenges for meeting nominal tax revenue targets in the Union Budget.

UPSC Relevance

General Studies Paper III: This topic is central to "Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment." It involves understanding the methodology of GDP estimation (Prelims) and analyzing the impact of global trade wars/tariffs on domestic manufacturing and the external sector (Mains). The data on PFCE and GFCF (investment) is crucial for answering questions on the "engines of growth" and the "middle-income trap."

3. ISRO PSLV-C62/EOS-N1 Mission: Strategic Advancement in Space

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to commence its 2026 flight calendar with the launch of the **PSLV-C62/EOS-N1 Mission** on January 12 at 10:17 hrs IST. This mission, launching from the First Launch Pad (FLP) at Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota, signifies a major milestone for India's strategic surveillance and the burgeoning private space sector.

Key Highlights of the Mission

- **Strategic Primary Payload:** The mission carries **EOS-N1 (Anvesha)**, a high-resolution hyperspectral Earth observation satellite developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**. It is specifically designed for strategic reconnaissance, border surveillance, and material identification through advanced spectral signatures.
- **Confidence Restoration:** This is a critical "comeback" flight for the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)**, ISRO's workhorse, following the failure of the PSLV-C61 mission in May 2025 (which failed to deploy EOS-09 due to a pressure drop in the third stage).
- **Technological Firsts:** The mission features **AayulSAT**, India's first on-orbit satellite refueling demonstrator developed by startup OrbitAID Aerospace. This aims to extend satellite lifespans and promote sustainable space operations.
- **Global and Academic Collaboration:** Along with the primary satellite, the rocket will deploy **18 co-passenger payloads** from domestic startups, academia, and international partners including Mauritius (IMJS), Spain (Kestrel Initial Demonstrator), and the USA.
- **Launch Vehicle Configuration:** The mission utilizes the **PSLV-DL variant**, which features two solid strap-on boosters to provide additional thrust during the initial phase of the flight.
- **Milestone Achievement:** This marks the **105th launch** from the Sriharikota spaceport and underscores India's growing role in the global small-satellite launch market through its commercial arm, **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**.





Constitutional and Legal Framework

The Indian space sector operates under a distinct legal and policy framework to ensure national security and commercial growth:

- **Article 51A(h):** The Constitution of India encourages the development of scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform.
- **Indian Space Policy 2023:** This policy institutionalizes the role of the private sector (via IN-SPACe) and defines the operational responsibilities of ISRO, NSIL, and the Department of Space (DoS).
- **Strategic Autonomy:** The development of the EOS-N1 by DRDO aligns with the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative, ensuring that critical surveillance data remains under sovereign control.

Important Definitions

- **Hyperspectral Imaging:** A technique that collects and processes information from across the electromagnetic spectrum. Unlike the human eye (which sees only visible light), hyperspectral sensors can detect "invisible" light shades, allowing for the identification of specific materials and camouflaged objects.
- **Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSO):** A specific type of polar orbit where the satellite passes over any given point of the Earth's surface at the same local solar time. This is ideal for Earth observation as it ensures consistent lighting conditions for imaging.
- **Workhorse Rocket:** A term used for the PSLV due to its high reliability and versatility in launching various classes of satellites into multiple orbits.

Conclusion

The PSLV-C62/EOS-N1 mission represents a sophisticated blend of national security requirements and commercial ambitions. By successfully addressing the technical hurdles of previous missions and integrating cutting-edge technologies like on-orbit refueling and hyperspectral imaging, ISRO reaffirms its position as a global leader in cost-effective and reliable space transportation.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Science and Technology):** Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology; awareness in the fields of Space.
- **GS Paper III (Security):** Role of space-based assets in border management and internal security.
- **Prelims Focus:** PSLV vs GSLV configurations, types of Earth Observation Satellites (EOS), and the role of NSIL and IN-SPACe.

4. NATGRID: Evolution and Challenges of India's Intelligence Architecture

The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), conceptualized as a response to the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks to prevent intelligence fragmentation, has undergone a significant quantitative and qualitative expansion in 2025. While intended as a "technological crown jewel" for counter-terrorism, its recent integration with the National Population Register (NPR) and adoption of AI-driven analytical tools like 'Gandiva' have sparked a debate on the shift from targeted surveillance to mass tracking. The lack of a statutory framework and independent oversight remains a primary concern for civil liberties in the digital age.



Key Highlights for UPSC

- **Origin and Intent:** Proposed in 2009 post-26/11 to provide a middleware interface for 11 central agencies to access 21 categories of data, eliminating "silos" between disparate databases like immigration, banking, and telecom.
- **Functional Expansion:** Usage has scaled to approximately 45,000 requests per month, with access being extended beyond central agencies to state police units down to the rank of Superintendent of Police (SP).
- **Integration with NPR:** The linking of NATGRID with the National Population Register (NPR) marks a paradigm shift, enabling the mapping of 1.19 billion residents rather than just tracking specific suspects or events.
- **Technological Sophistication:** Deployment of the "Gandiva" analytical engine allows for "entity resolution," using machine learning to triangulate fragmented records and facial recognition to create a comprehensive profile of individuals.
- **Structural Concerns:** Unlike similar bodies in other democracies, NATGRID was established via executive order rather than an Act of Parliament, leading to a lack of legislative oversight and accountability.
- **The Bias Paradox:** Reliance on algorithms risks "automated suspicion," where existing socio-economic or religious biases in policing are codified into "objective" digital hits, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities.



Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Right to Privacy (Article 21):** In the **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017)** judgment, the Supreme Court declared privacy a fundamental right. Any state interference must pass the triple test of **Legality** (statute), **Necessity** (legitimate state aim), and **Proportionality**.
- **Article 51:** While the state has a duty to protect its citizens (National Security), this must be balanced against individual liberties.
- **Executive Order vs. Statute:** NATGRID currently lacks a statutory backing, meaning it operates without a law passed by Parliament that defines its powers, limits, and the rights of the citizens it monitors.

Key Definitions

- **Middleware Interface:** A software layer that allows different computer systems or databases to communicate and share data even if they use different formats.
- **Entity Resolution:** The process of determining whether multiple records or data points (like a name in a hotel registry and a phone number in a KYC database) refer to the same real-world individual.
- **Digital Authoritarianism:** The use of information technology by a government to surveil, repress, or manipulate its citizens.
- **National Population Register (NPR):** A database of "usual residents" of the country, containing demographic and biometric particulars.



Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The evolution of NATGRID reflects the classic "Security vs. Liberty" dilemma. While the integration of data is vital for national security to prevent intelligence failures, the absence of a robust data protection law and judicial oversight risks transforming a counter-terrorism tool into a machinery for mass surveillance. For the UPSC aspirant, NATGRID is a crucial case study in **Internal Security (GS III)** regarding the role of technology in policing, and **Polity (GS II)** regarding the protection of fundamental rights against executive overreach.

5. Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR): India's Emerging Silent Pandemic

In the 129th edition of 'Mann Ki Baat' on December 28, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the escalating crisis of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in India. Citing recent data from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the PM highlighted that common infections like pneumonia and urinary tract infections (UTIs) are becoming increasingly difficult to treat as pathogens develop resistance to conventional antibiotics. The address serves as a critical "anagnorisis"—a moment of realization—aimed at shifting AMR from a technical medical concern to a mainstream public health priority.

Key Highlights for UPSC

- **The "Misuse and Overuse" Crisis:** The primary driver of AMR in India is the irrational and indiscriminate use of antibiotics, often taken without medical supervision for self-limiting viral infections.
- **Mainstreaming Awareness:** PM Modi's appeal directly targets citizen behavior, translating complex laboratory warnings into a national call to action to end the "thoughtless popping of pills."
- **The One Health Framework:** AMR is recognized as a "hydra-headed" challenge requiring a **One Health approach**, which integrates human health, animal husbandry, and environmental safety (e.g., managing antibiotic runoff from pharmaceutical industries).
- **Surveillance Gaps:** Currently, India's **National AMR Surveillance Network (NARS-Net)** relies heavily on 60 sentinel medical college labs in urban areas. Experts emphasize the need to expand this to secondary, primary, and private healthcare centers to gain a truly representative national dataset.
- **Impact of "Superbugs":** Pathogens like *K. pneumoniae* and *E. coli* are showing significant declines in susceptibility to "reserve" antibiotics like carbapenems, threatening the success of modern medical procedures such as surgeries and cancer treatments.
- **National Action Plan 2.0:** Launched for 2025-2029, this upgraded plan focuses on inter-sectoral coordination and the legal regulation of over-the-counter (OTC) antibiotic sales.



Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 21 (Right to Health):** The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that the "Right to Life" includes the right to health. AMR threatens this right by rendering essential life-saving drugs ineffective.
- **Article 47 (DPSP):** It is a primary duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living, and to improve public health.



- **Schedule H1 of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules:** India introduced the Red Line Campaign to mark antibiotic packaging with a red line, indicating that these drugs should not be sold without a prescription.
- **National Action Plan on AMR (NAP-AMR) 2.0:** A multi-ministerial policy framework (2025-2029) designed to align India with the WHO's Global Action Plan.

Key Definitions

- **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):** The ability of microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, fungi) to resist the effects of drugs that once killed them or inhibited their growth.
- **Reserve Antibiotics:** Life-saving drugs (like Carbapenems or Colistin) used as a last resort when first-line and second-line treatments fail.
- **NARS-Net:** A network established by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to monitor resistance trends across India.
- **Sentinel Sites:** Specific locations (like medical colleges) selected to represent a larger population for health monitoring and data collection.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The Prime Minister's intervention marks a pivotal shift in India's battle against AMR, emphasizing that medical innovation must be matched by public discipline. However, success depends on moving beyond awareness to robust enforcement of drug regulations and the expansion of rural surveillance. For UPSC aspirants, AMR is a high-priority topic under **GS Paper III (Science & Technology and Environment)** and **GS Paper II (Social Justice/Health)**, requiring an understanding of the scientific mechanism of resistance, the "One Health" policy framework, and the global health security challenges India faces.

6. Indian Household Consumption: Shifting Paradigms in MPCE

The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) for 2022-23 and 2023-24, conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), provides a decade-over-decade update on the spending patterns of Indian households. The findings reveal a significant structural shift in the Indian economy, where both rural and urban populations are moving away from basic subsistence (food) toward aspirational and service-oriented spending (discretionary items).

Key Findings and Consumption Trends

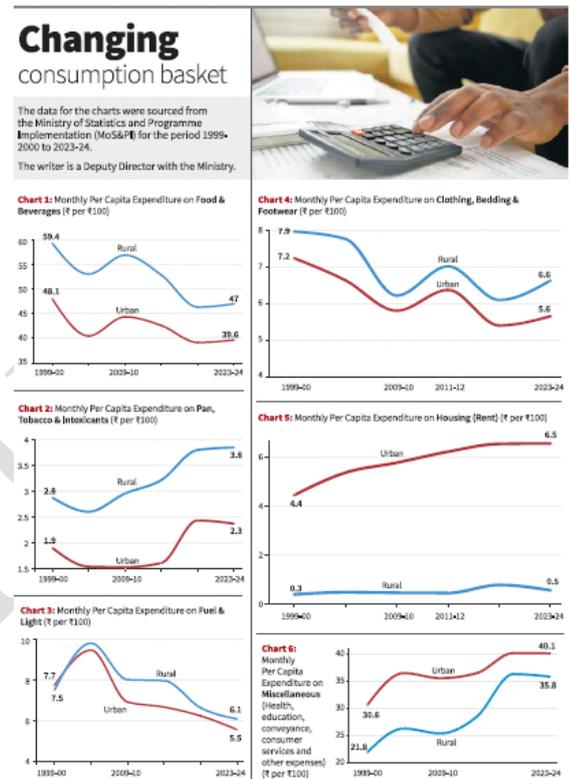
- **Confirmation of Engel's Law:** The share of expenditure on food has dropped significantly—from 59% to 47% in rural areas and 48% to 39% in urban areas. This confirms that as real incomes rise, the proportion of income spent on food declines, even if the absolute amount spent increases.
- **Narrowing Rural-Urban Divide:** The consumption gap between rural and urban households has shrunk from 84% in 2011-12 to 70% in 2023-24. Rural Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) is growing at a faster rate (9.3%) compared to urban growth (8.3%), indicating more inclusive economic expansion.
- **Dietary Diversification:** Within the food basket, spending on cereals has plummeted, while expenditure on protein-rich items (eggs, fish, meat), milk, fruits, and processed foods has risen. This indicates a shift toward a more varied and nutritious diet across the country.



- **Impact of Welfare Schemes:** The reduction in fuel and light expenditure—from 6.7% to 4.9%—highlights the success of government interventions like **PM Ujjwala Yojana (LPG)** and **Saubhagya** (electrification), which have substituted traditional biomass with cleaner, cheaper energy.
- **Surge in Aspirational Spending:** Miscellaneous expenditure, covering health, education, conveyance, and consumer services, has seen the sharpest rise. In rural India, this category grew from 22% to nearly 36% of the total budget, reflecting deeper digital penetration and better service access.
- **Urban Housing Stress:** While most categories saw a decline in share, urban rent expenditure increased significantly (from 4.46% to 6.58%), pointing toward rising urbanization pressures and rental inflation in metropolitan hubs.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

- **Article 38 & 39 (DPSP):** The state is mandated to promote the welfare of people by securing a social order where economic justice is informed. HCES data is the primary tool to measure if "concentration of wealth" is being avoided and if living standards are improving.
- **Right to Food (Article 21):** The shift from cereals to processed foods and proteins has implications for the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**. Data suggests a need to diversify the Public Distribution System (PDS) beyond just wheat and rice.
- **Collection of Statistics Act, 2008:** This provides the legal basis for the NSSO to conduct these surveys, ensuring data confidentiality while making it mandatory for households to provide accurate information.



Important Definitions

- **Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE):** The average amount spent by an individual in a month on goods and services for consumption. It is used as a proxy for income in India since direct income data is difficult to capture in the informal sector.
- **Engel's Law:** An economic theory stating that as income increases, the percentage of income spent on food decreases, while the proportion spent on other goods (like health and education) increases.
- **Gini Coefficient:** A statistical measure of distribution used to gauge economic inequality. The latest HCES shows a decline in the Gini coefficient (0.266 to 0.237 for rural), suggesting reduced consumption inequality.
- **Imputed Value:** The monetary value assigned to goods received for free (like PDS grains or school uniforms) to calculate a "true" MPCE that reflects government welfare support.

Conclusion

The HCES 2023-24 data signals that India is successfully transitioning from a "subsistence economy" to a "discretionary economy." The narrowing rural-urban gap and the decline in consumption inequality are



positive indicators for India's "Viksit Bharat" goals. However, the rising cost of urban services like rent and the increasing spend on processed foods present new challenges for public health and urban planning.

UPSC Relevance

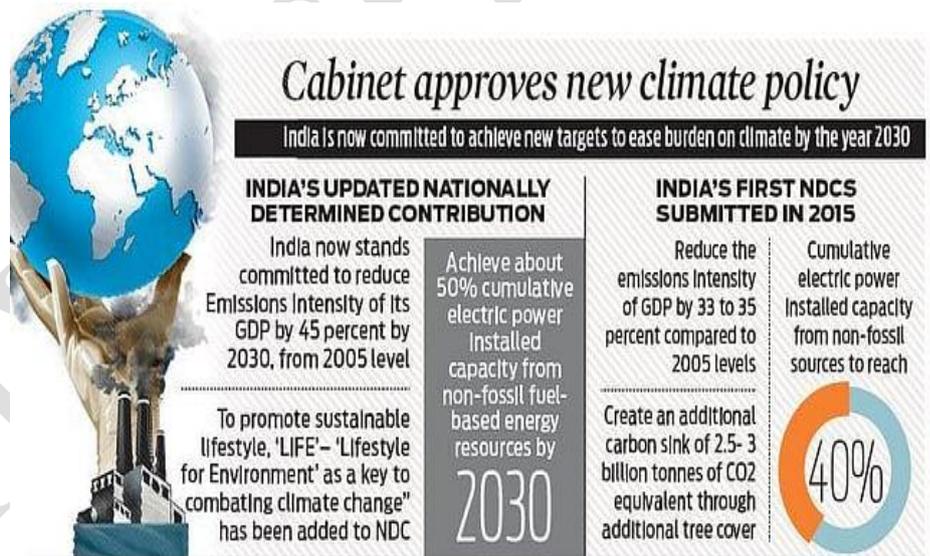
- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and employment. It is critical for understanding **poverty estimation** (replacing old Tendulkar/Rangarajan baskets).
- **GS Paper II (Social Justice):** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.
- **Prelims Focus:** Definitions of MPCE, Gini Coefficient, Engel's Law, and the role of MoSPI/NSSO in national statistics.

7. India's Climate Commitments: Progress, Paradigms, and Pitfalls

India's climate trajectory is at a crossroads as it navigates the transition from the 2015 Paris Agreement pledges to the 2070 Net-Zero goal. While the country has achieved significant milestones in emissions intensity and non-fossil capacity, structural challenges in energy storage, coal dependency, and ecological quality persist. The following analysis evaluates India's performance against its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the underlying complexities of its "green" transition.

Key Highlights for UPSC

- **Emissions Intensity**
Success: India reduced its GDP emissions intensity by 36% by 2020 (using a 2005 baseline), surpassing its initial target of 33-35% a decade ahead of the 2030 deadline. This reflects a "decoupling" where economy grows faster than emissions.
- **Non-Fossil Capacity**
Milestone: By mid-2025, non-fossil fuel sources accounted for 51.4% of India's installed power capacity (~253 GW), meeting the updated Glasgow pledge (50% by 2030) well in advance.
- **The Generation-Capacity Gap:** Despite high renewable capacity, coal still provides over 70% of actual electricity generation. This is due to the "intermittency" of solar/wind and a massive shortfall in Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).
- **Carbon Sink Targets:** India is on track to achieve its 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent sequestration target by 2030. However, critics argue this is driven by "administrative designations" (plantations and orchards) rather than restored natural biodiversity.
- **Forest Definition Contention:** The Forest Survey of India (FSI) defines "forest cover" as any land over 1 hectare with a canopy density of >10%. This allows monocultures and roadside trees to be counted, potentially masking the degradation of pristine ecological zones.





- **Implementation Bottlenecks:** While the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAMPA) has accumulated ~₹95,000 crore, fund utilization remains low in several states, and land acquisition remains a primary hurdle for grid connectivity.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

- **Article 48A:** A Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP) that mandates the State to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
- **Article 51A(g):** A Fundamental Duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife.
- **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016:** Provides the legal framework for managing funds collected from industries that divert forest land for non-forest purposes.
- **Environment Protection Act, 1986:** The umbrella legislation providing the central government the power to protect and improve environmental quality.
- **Aravalli Judgment (2024):** A landmark Supreme Court ruling emphasizing that the "Green Belt" cannot be sacrificed for mining, reinforcing the "Public Trust Doctrine."

Important Definitions

- **Emissions Intensity:** The volume of greenhouse gas emissions emitted per unit of GDP. Reducing this means an economy is becoming more carbon-efficient even if it continues to grow.
- **Baseload Power:** The minimum amount of electric power that a grid must provide consistently to meet 24/7 demand; currently, coal remains India's primary baseload provider.
- **Net-Zero:** A state where the amount of greenhouse gases produced is balanced by the amount removed from the atmosphere. India's target year is 2070.
- **Capacity Factor:** The ratio of actual energy produced by a plant over a period to the maximum possible energy it could have produced. Solar and wind have lower capacity factors compared to thermal power.
- **Sequestration:** The process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide, primarily through biological means like forests and soil.

Conclusion

India has proven its ability to meet "quantified" targets through rapid technology deployment and policy pushes like the National Solar Mission. However, the "qualitative" transition—moving from installed capacity to actual green generation and from monoculture plantations to biodiverse forests—remains the true challenge. Achieving the 2070 Net-Zero goal will require not just headline metrics, but a systemic shift in grid management, storage infrastructure, and ecological transparency.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Environment & Economy):** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment; Growth, development, and infrastructure (Energy).
- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.
- **Prelims Focus:** NDC targets (Paris vs Glasgow), FSI forest definitions, CAMPA fund, and the role of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) in power forecasting.



8. Wind Energy Milestone: India Scaled 54.51 GW Capacity in 2025

India's renewable energy sector achieved a significant breakthrough in the calendar year 2025, adding a record **6.34 GW** of wind energy capacity. Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi, announced that this surge has pushed India's total cumulative wind capacity to **54.51 GW**. The 2025 performance represents an **85.4% increase** over the 3.42 GW added in 2024, signaling an accelerated momentum in India's transition toward a non-fossil fuel-based economy.

Key Highlights for UPSC

- **Record Annual Addition:** The 6.34 GW added in 2025 is the highest ever for the wind sector in a single year, nearly doubling the previous year's installation and showcasing improved execution of hybrid and standalone tenders.
- **Global Standing:** With 54.51 GW, India maintains its position as the **fourth-largest** wind power market in the world, trailing only China, the USA, and Germany.
- **Panchamrit Targets:** This growth is pivotal for achieving India's updated "Panchamrit" goal of **500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030**, of which wind energy is expected to contribute approximately 100-140 GW.
- **Non-Fossil Milestone:** As of late 2025, India has already achieved over **51%** of its total electric capacity from non-fossil sources, meeting one of its COP26 commitments five years ahead of the 2030 schedule.
- **Regional Concentration:** The majority of the capacity addition remains concentrated in wind-rich states like **Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka**, which together account for nearly half of India's total wind infrastructure.
- **Technological Shift:** The year 2025 saw a pivot toward **Offshore Wind** and **Wind-Solar Hybrid** projects, supported by a ₹7,453 crore Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme for 1 GW of offshore projects in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 48A (DPSP):** The Constitution mandates the State to "endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country."
- **Article 51A(g):** It is a Fundamental Duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment.
- **National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy (2018):** Provides a framework to promote large grid-connected wind-solar PV systems for optimal utilization of transmission infrastructure and land.
- **Offshore Wind Energy Policy (2015):** Governs the development of wind energy in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- **Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO):** A legal mandate under the **Electricity Act, 2003**, requiring power distribution companies to purchase a certain percentage of electricity from renewable sources, including a specific sub-category for wind.

Key Definitions

- **Gigawatt (GW):** A unit of power equal to one billion watts. In 2025, India's total installed electricity capacity (fossil + non-fossil) surpassed 500 GW.



- **Intermittency:** The non-continuous nature of power generation from sources like wind and solar, which vary based on weather conditions.
- **Repowering:** The process of replacing older, smaller wind turbines with modern, high-capacity ones to increase the efficiency of existing wind sites.
- **Viability Gap Funding (VGF):** A one-time or deferred grant provided to support infrastructure projects that are economically justified but fall short of financial viability.
- **Capacity Factor:** The ratio of actual energy produced by a wind turbine over a period to the theoretical maximum possible energy it could have produced if running at full capacity constantly.

Conclusion

India's wind energy performance in 2025 marks a turning point from stagnation to high-growth momentum. While the 54.51 GW milestone is impressive, the sector must now address structural challenges such as **intermittency, grid stability, and land acquisition** to meet the 100 GW+ target for 2030. The integration of advanced **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)** and the successful launch of offshore tenders will be the next critical steps in making wind energy a reliable "baseload" contributor to India's energy grid.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Economy & Environment):** Infrastructure (Energy); Conservation, environmental pollution, and degradation.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.
- **Prelims Focus:** Target years for 500 GW and Net-Zero (2070); nodal agencies like the National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE); and the specifics of the PM-KUSUM and Green Hydrogen missions.

9. US Interest in Greenland: Geopolitics and Arctic Sovereignty

The reported deliberations within the Trump administration regarding the purchase of Greenland have reignited a significant diplomatic and legal debate. While the U.S. frames this as a national security imperative to counter Russian and Chinese influence in the Arctic, the Kingdom of Denmark and the semi-autonomous government of Greenland have categorically rejected the possibility of a sale. The situation highlights the growing strategic importance of the Arctic region due to climate-induced accessibility and its vast untapped mineral wealth.

Key Highlights for UPSC

- **Strategic Location:** Greenland is central to the **GIUK (Greenland-Iceland-UK) Gap**, a maritime chokepoint vital for monitoring naval movements in the North Atlantic. It also hosts the **Pituffik Space Base**, the northernmost U.S. military installation, which is critical for early missile warning systems.
- **Arctic Competition:** The U.S. views control over Greenland as essential to deter "Arctic aggression" from Russia, which has been reopening Soviet-era bases, and China, which has declared itself a "Near-Arctic State" and proposed a "Polar Silk Road."
- **Mineral Wealth:** Greenland possesses some of the world's largest undeveloped deposits of **Rare Earth Elements (REEs)**—essential for green energy technologies—alongside lithium, graphite, and





uranium. Currently, China controls approximately 70% of global REE production, making Greenland an alternative supply chain hub.

- **Diplomatic Fallout:** The proposal has strained relations with **NATO allies**. Denmark has warned that any unilateral U.S. move could threaten the integrity of the alliance. Major European powers (France, UK, Germany) have issued joint statements supporting Greenland's right to self-determination.
- **The "All Options" Doctrine:** The White House's refusal to rule out military action has shifted the discourse from a real estate transaction to a matter of international law concerning **sovereignty and territorial integrity**.
- **Internal Autonomy:** Under the **Self-Government Act of 2009**, Greenlanders are recognized as a separate people under international law with a right to self-determination, meaning Denmark cannot legally "sell" the territory without the consent of the Greenlandic people.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

- **UN Charter Article 2(4):** Prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Any acquisition through military pressure would be legally null and void.
- **Right to Self-Determination:** Enshrined in the UN Charter and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), this principle ensures that the people of Greenland alone have the right to determine their political status.
- **1951 Defense of Greenland Treaty:** A bilateral agreement between the U.S. and Denmark that allows the U.S. to operate military facilities. The U.S. already has significant access, making "ownership" a political rather than purely operational goal.
- **Danish Constitution:** Any change in the status of Greenland requires a constitutional amendment in Denmark and a referendum in Greenland, making a simple "purchase" legally impossible under current Danish law.

Key Definitions

- **GIUK Gap:** The naval chokepoint between Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom; a historical strategic barrier for Russian/Soviet submarines entering the Atlantic.
- **Sovereignty:** The supreme authority of a state over its territory and people, protected under international law from external interference.
- **Rare Earth Elements (REEs):** A group of 17 chemical elements used in high-tech devices, defense systems, and electric vehicle batteries.
- **Near-Arctic State:** A term coined by China to justify its participation in Arctic governance, despite having no territorial borders in the region.

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The Greenland controversy is more than a territorial dispute; it is a symptom of the "New Cold War" being fought over the melting Arctic. For India, which is an **Observer** in the **Arctic Council**, these developments are significant. India's own **Arctic Policy (2022)** emphasizes scientific research and sustainable resource use. Any destabilization of the Arctic governance framework or the weakening of NATO norms regarding sovereignty could have ripple effects on global security architectures.

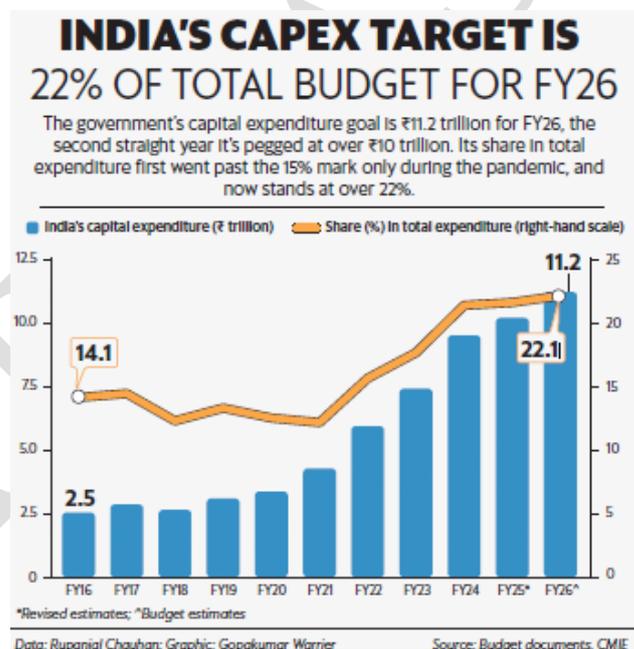


10. Union Budget FY26: Structural Shift Toward Capital Expenditure

The Government of India has set a landmark capital expenditure (Capex) target of **₹11.2 trillion** for the financial year 2025-26. This represents a sustained commitment to infrastructure-led growth, with Capex maintaining its position above the ₹10 trillion mark for the second consecutive year. Historically, Capex as a share of total expenditure hovered below 15%; however, post-pandemic fiscal strategy has seen this figure climb to over **22%**, signaling a "quality of expenditure" shift from consumption-led spending to investment-led development.

Strategic Priorities in Capex Growth

- **Unprecedented Scale:** The ₹11.2 trillion outlay is approximately 10.1% higher than the revised estimates of the previous year, highlighting the government's intent to use public investment as the primary engine for economic recovery.
- **Infrastructure Multiplier:** Focus remains on high-multiplier sectors such as **Railways, Roads, and Defense**. For every ₹1 spent on capital assets, the estimated return to the economy is nearly ₹2.45, far exceeding the multiplier for revenue expenditure.
- **Crowding-in Effect:** By taking the lead in large-scale infrastructure projects, the government aims to de-risk the investment climate, thereby encouraging the private sector to "crowd in" and increase their own capital outlays.
- **Fiscal Consolidation:** Despite the high Capex, the government has targeted a **Fiscal Deficit of 4.4% of GDP** for FY26, down from 4.8% in FY25, demonstrating a balance between aggressive investment and fiscal prudence.
- **State-Level Support:** A significant portion (₹1.5 lakh crore) is earmarked as **50-year interest-free loans to States**, ensuring that the "Capex revolution" penetrates sub-national levels for regional development.
- **Digital and Green Infrastructure:** Newer allocations are increasingly directed toward the **National Manufacturing Mission** and clean-tech ecosystems, including solar PV cells and EV battery infrastructure.



Constitutional and Legal Framework

- **Article 112 (Annual Financial Statement):** Mandates the President to lay the budget before Parliament. Crucially, Clause (2) requires the budget to distinguish **expenditure on revenue account** from other expenditure (Capital).
- **Article 292:** Grants the Executive the power to borrow upon the security of the Consolidated Fund of India within limits set by Parliament, which finances a large part of the Capex.
- **FRBM Act, 2003:** The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act provides the statutory target for fiscal deficit. The shift toward Capex is a strategy to ensure that even with borrowing, the debt is used to create **productive assets** rather than just meeting daily operational costs.



Essential Definitions

- **Capital Expenditure (Capex):** Funds used by the government to acquire, construct, or improve physical assets like roads, bridges, and machinery. It either creates an asset or reduces a liability (e.g., debt repayment).
- **Revenue Expenditure:** Day-to-day operational expenses that do not result in asset creation. Examples include salaries, pensions, interest payments, and subsidies.
- **Crowding-in Effect:** A phenomenon where increased government involvement in a sector (like infrastructure) makes it more profitable or less risky for private firms to invest.
- **Fiscal Multiplier:** The ratio of a change in national income to the change in government spending that causes it. Capex typically has a much higher multiplier than revenue spending.
- **Effective Capital Expenditure:** A broader metric that includes the Union's own Capex plus the **Grants-in-Aid** given to States for the creation of capital assets.

Conclusion

The FY26 Capex target of ₹11.2 trillion is not just a numerical goal but a statement of economic philosophy. By keeping Capex at 22% of total spending, India is attempting to break the cycle of "consumption-heavy" deficits. The success of this strategy hinges on the timely execution of projects and the ability of the private sector to pick up the mantle of investment as the government gradually pursues fiscal consolidation.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Capital Budgeting, Infrastructure, and Government Budgeting. It is vital for questions on "Quality of Expenditure" and "Growth vs Inflation" debates.
- **GS Paper II (Governance):** Federalism (loans to states) and Parliamentary oversight of the Union Budget.
- **Prelims Focus:** Article 112, distinction between Capital and Revenue receipts/expenditure, and the specific target numbers for FY26 (₹11.2 trillion / 4.4% Fiscal Deficit).

11. India-Israel Relations: The Gaza Peace Plan and Strategic Cooperation

On January 7, 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu engaged in a high-level telephonic conversation. The dialogue focused on the implementation of the **Gaza Peace Plan**, a diplomatic framework aimed at resolving the prolonged conflict in West Asia. This interaction underscores India's evolving role as a credible stakeholder in regional stability and highlights the deep-rooted strategic partnership between New Delhi and Jerusalem in the face of transnational security threats.

Key Highlights for UPSC

- **Briefing on the Gaza Peace Plan:** Prime Minister Netanyahu provided an update on the implementation of the US-backed peace framework, which entered a critical phase in late 2025. The plan focuses on a permanent ceasefire, the release of hostages, and the demilitarization of the Gaza Strip.
- **India's Diplomatic Stance:** PM Modi reaffirmed India's consistent support for a "just and durable peace"





- in the region. While India maintains a strategic partnership with Israel, it continues to advocate for a **Two-State Solution** and the protection of civilian lives.
- **Zero-Tolerance for Terrorism:** Both leaders reiterated their commitment to a zero-tolerance approach toward terrorism in all its forms. This alignment is central to the bilateral security architecture, particularly in intelligence sharing and counter-terrorism operations.
- **The "One Health" and Strategic Convergence:** Beyond security, the conversation touched upon "shared priorities" for 2026, including cooperation in water security, agriculture, and high-end technology, sectors where Israel is a key partner for India's domestic missions.
- **Regional Stability & IMEC:** The implementation of peace in Gaza is vital for India's long-term economic interests, specifically the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**, which requires a stable West Asia to function as a viable trade route.
- **Future Diplomatic Engagements:** The call set the stage for a potential visit by PM Netanyahu to India in the near future, which has been delayed multiple times due to the regional security situation.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

- **Article 51 (Directive Principles):** The Constitution of India directs the State to promote international peace and security and maintain just and honorable relations between nations.
- **Article 253:** Grants Parliament the power to make laws for implementing international treaties, agreements, and conventions with foreign countries.
- **The UN Charter:** India's stance on the Gaza conflict is guided by the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the peaceful resolution of disputes as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.
- **Strategic Partnership Agreement (2017):** The legal foundation that upgraded India-Israel ties to a "Strategic Partnership," focusing on defense, water, and agriculture.

Important Definitions

- **Two-State Solution:** The proposed diplomatic resolution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which envisions an independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, west of the Jordan River.
- **Gaza Peace Plan (2025-26):** A multilateral framework involving a phased ceasefire, humanitarian aid corridors, and the establishment of a technocratic Palestinian governance body in Gaza without the presence of militant factions.
- **Strategic Partnership:** A high-level bilateral relationship that involves deep cooperation on long-term goals, particularly in defense, technology, and intelligence, distinguishing it from regular diplomatic ties.
- **West Asia (Middle East):** The term used by Indian diplomacy to refer to the region including Israel, Palestine, the Gulf nations, and Iran.

Conclusion

The interaction between PM Modi and PM Netanyahu reflects the pragmatic balancing act that defines modern Indian foreign policy. By engaging deeply with Israel on security and the "Gaza Peace Plan" while simultaneously supporting Palestinian self-determination, India demonstrates its **Strategic Autonomy**. The successful implementation of peace in the region is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for India's connectivity projects and energy security.



UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** 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 (Internal Security):** Linkages of organized crime with terrorism; role of international cooperation in counter-terrorism.
- **Prelims Focus:** Locations in West Asia (Gaza, West Bank, Rafah), India's vote in the UN on Palestine, and the components of the IMEC project.

12. Milestone in Public Healthcare: 50,000 Facilities NQAS Certified

India's public healthcare system achieved a historic landmark in early 2026, with over **50,000 public health facilities** successfully receiving certification under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS). This milestone, announced by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, underscores a paradigm shift toward quality-centric healthcare delivery. The initiative, which began in 2015 with just 10 certified facilities, has now scaled exponentially to include a vast network of primary, secondary, and tertiary centers, reinforcing the government's commitment to "Universal Health Coverage" and patient safety.

Key Highlights for UPSC

- **Exponential Scale-up:** From 10 facilities in 2015 to **50,373** by December 31, 2025, the journey reflects a robust institutionalization of quality standards across all tiers of the public health system.
- **Primary Care Dominance:** Of the certified facilities, over **48,600 are Ayushman Arogya Mandirs** (at the primary level), demonstrating that quality improvement is no longer restricted to urban district hospitals but has reached the grassroots.
- **Quality Framework (NQAS):** Certified facilities are evaluated against eight "Areas of Concern," including Patient Rights, Clinical Care, Infection Control, and Quality Management. These standards are accredited by **ISQua** (International Society for Quality in Healthcare), aligning Indian facilities with global benchmarks.
- **Digital Transformation:** The achievement was accelerated by the introduction of **Virtual Assessments** in 2024, particularly for Sub-Health Centres, which allowed for rapid evaluation without compromising on stringent quality checks.
- **Financial Incentives:** Certification is not merely a title; it entitles facilities to **monetary incentives** (e.g., ₹10,000 per functional bed for district hospitals) used for staff welfare and further facility improvement, creating a self-sustaining cycle of excellence.
- **Equity in Healthcare:** By focusing on public facilities, NQAS directly impacts the "out-of-pocket expenditure" for the poor and vulnerable, ensuring that free public care is also high-quality care.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Article 21:** The Supreme Court has interpreted the "Right to Life" to include the **Right to Health**. NQAS provides the operational framework to ensure this right is met with quality standards.
- **Article 47 (DPSP):** Mandates the State to regard the improvement of public health as among its primary duties.
- **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017:** Explicitly aims to align 50% of all public health facilities toward NQAS certification to build trust in the public sector.



- **National Health Mission (NHM):** The overarching scheme under which the National Quality Assurance Programme is implemented and funded.

Important Definitions

- **National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS):** A comprehensive set of standards developed specifically for the Indian public health system to ensure services are safe, patient-centric, and evidence-based.
- **Ayushman Arogya Mandir:** Formerly known as Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs), these are the frontline primary health facilities under the Ayushman Bharat scheme.
- **ISQua (International Society for Quality in Healthcare):** The "accreditor of the accreditors," which ensures that NQAS meets international rigor.
- **Secondary Care:** Specialized healthcare provided by medical professionals who generally do not have the first contact with a patient (e.g., Community Health Centres and District Hospitals).

Conclusion and UPSC Relevance

The certification of 50,000 facilities is a "Quantum Leap" that moves India away from a purely volume-based health target to a value-based one. For UPSC aspirants, this topic is highly relevant for **GS Paper II (Social Justice/Health)** and **GS Paper III (Economy/Infrastructure)**. It highlights how digital governance (virtual assessments) and federal cooperation (State vs Central roles in NHM) can resolve long-standing service delivery gaps. The next challenge remains the interim target of certifying 50% of all public facilities by March 2026, which will require sustained political will and decentralized monitoring.
